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History of PROSTITUTION

*Among All the Peoples of the World, From
the Most Remote Antiquity to
the Present Day*

by

PAUL LACROIX

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Member of Many Academies and Learned Societies
French and Foreign

Translated from the original French by

SAMUEL PUTNAM

VOLUME THREE

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History of Prostitution

PART THREE

Christian Era



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CHAPTER XXI

WHAT were the symptoms, what was the medical treatment of the plague of Naples at the time it first made its appearance? It is not necessary for us to assume that this horrible plague, which was looked upon at first as incurable, possessed in the beginning the same character or the same aspect as it did at the time of its ascendancy and in its stationary period. It might be said, without fear or paradox, that the malady, with certain exceptions, dependent upon certain eccentric circumstances, is the same today that it is was before the monstrous combination of the leprosy and the venereal virus was effected. From the year 1540, according to the statement of Guiccardino, who reported the origin of the epidemic in the year 1494, the malady "had become greatly mollified and had been changed into a number of species different from the first." In the beginning, that is to say, in the period of time following the sudden and almost universal outbreak of this unknown disease, which the physicians looked upon as a *pestilence*, the symptoms well merited the terror which they inspired, and we can understand how, in all the countries where the malady had broken out, police laws came to be enacted in imitation of those which had formerly been in force against leprosy, with the object of cutting off from the society of the living, the unfortunate victims of this shameful pestilence. It was supposed, moreover, that the contagion was more immediate, prompter, more inevitable, than in any other contagious malady; it was not known whether the disease was only transmitted by carnal conjunction or not; it was imagined that the breath, the very look of the victim, might communicate the infection.

All the physicians who observed the malady between the years 1494 and 1514, commonly regarded as the first years of its in-

vasion and development, appear to have been frightened by their own observations; they agreed with one another and repeated one another's words, almost, in their descriptions of the syphilitic symptoms, which could not have been equally recognizable in all patients, but which were looked upon nevertheless, as forming the primitive constitution of the plague of Naples. Jérôme Fracastor has admirably summed up the treatises of Léoniceno, of Torrella, of Cataneo and of Almenar, his contemporaries, in his book *De Morbis Contagiosis*, in which he describes the symptoms which he himself had been able to observe, when he was a student of medicine and a professor of philosophy in the University of Verona. Fracastor sums up in these terms the frightful picture which he gives us of the plague of Naples at the time of its origin: "The patients were sorrowful, tired and downcast; they had pale faces. The majority of them had chancres on their shameful parts, and these chancres were stubborn; when they had been cured in one place, they would reappear in another, and the cure always had to be begun over again. Afterwards, crusted pustules appeared upon the skin; they commenced in some by attacking the head, which was the place where they most commonly appeared; in others, they appeared elsewhere. At first they were small, growing little by little to the size of a nutshell, which they resembled in appearance; in some these pustules were small and dry; in others they were gross and humid; in some livid, in others whitish and a little pale in color; in still others, hard and reddish. They would open after a few days and would give forth continually an incredible quantity of a vile and stinking liquor. When they were opened they became true phagedenic ulcers, which consumed not only the flesh, but also the bone. Those whose upper parts were attacked, had malign fluxions which ate away sometimes the palate, sometimes the tracheal artery, sometimes the gullet, sometimes the tonsils. Some lost their lips, others the nose, others the eyes, others all the shameful parts. A great number suffered from gummous tumors which greatly disfigured them and which were often of the size of an egg or a biscuit. When opened they gave forth a white

and mucilaginous fluid. They attacked principally the arms and the legs; sometimes they ulcerated; sometimes they became calous until death resulted. But as though this were not sufficient, there was also great pain in the members; this pain frequently accompanied the pustules; sometimes it preceded them and sometimes followed them. These pains which were long and insupportable were felt principally at night, and were not located in the joints, but in the members themselves and in the nerves. Some, however, had pustules without pain; others pain without pustules; the majority had both pustules and pain. All the members, however, were in a state of languor; the patients were emaciated, without appetite and did not sleep, being always sad and of a melancholy humor and desiring always to remain in bed. The face and the legs became inflamed. A small fever sometimes showed itself, but rarely. Some suffered from pains in the head, a prolonged pain, and one that yielded to no remedy." We regret having to employ the flat and incorrect translation of the good Jault, who, considering that he had Astruc under his eyes, gives a very weak idea of the firm, elegant and poetic style of Fracastor, but we wish to leave to a member of the profession the task of giving here a medical rather than a literary translation. Can one, after the reading of this characteristic description, conceive the learned Fracastor's denying, in the same work, the striking analogy which existed between the leprosy and the plague of Naples? The latter, being no more than a complication of the leprosy under the influence of the venereal virus, must have had an intimate relation to the *peste inguinale* of the sixteenth century and the *mal des ardents* of the nineteenth, which also were but epidemic transformations of the elephantiasis. But the plague of Naples, from the year 1514, underwent metamorphoses of its own, produced undoubtedly by what we shall term the growth of species in the malady. Jean de Vigo is the first to cite the osseous scirrhi which the patients experienced a year or less after the atrocious internal pains of their members. These scirrhi which greatly tormented the patient, especially during the night, always ended in caries of the dorsal vertebrae. Pietro Manardi,

who treated with great cleverness the syphilitic maladies about the same time as Jean de Vigo (1514 to 1526), observes new symptoms denotative of the venereal virus: "The principal sign of the French plague," he says in Chapter V of his treatise *De Morbo Gallico*, "consists in pustules which make their appearance on the extremity of the virile organ in men, at the entrance of the vulva or at the neck of the matrix in women, and in an itching of the parts which contain the semen. Most often these pustules are ulcerated; I say *most often*, because I have seen patients in whom they were as hard as warts or nails." It would appear that, during this second period, the plague of Naples, despite certain symptomatic variations, always preserved its intensity, but from 1526 to 1540, it entered a period of diminution, although the venereal evil was still marked by tumors of the inguinal glands and by falling out of the hair. "Sometimes the virus makes its appearance in the loins in the form of tumified glands," says the French physician Antoine Lecoq, who published in 1540 his *De Ligno Sancto*;^{*} "if the tumor suppurates, this is often a good thing. This malady is called *bubon* (buboes); others call it *poulain* (foal or colt), as a form of raillery against those who are attacked with it, since the latter walked by spreading out their legs as though they were on horseback." As to the falling out of the hair, this might be attributed less to the malady itself than to the mercurial treatment of it. "During the last six years or thereabouts," remarked Fracastor in 1546, "the malady has once more changed considerably. We no longer see pustules except in very few patients, along with almost no pain, or very light pains, but with many gummous tumors. A thing which astonishes everybody is the falling out of the hair on the head and on other parts of the body. . . . It is even worse at present; the teeth become loose in many and in some cases fall out." This was evidently

^{*}Cf. the Italian *legno d'India* (wood of India). See Aretino (my edition), *Letters*, L: "He had come out of a love affair with a lady friend with so bad a case of syphilis that he would have been the despair of the wood of India (*averebbe fatto disperare il legno d'India*); he was covered with it from head to foot very bestially. It had embroidered his hands, enameled his face, bejeweled his neck and strung his throat with coins, so that he looked as though he were made of mosaie, etc." See Aretino, alib.

the consequence of the employment of mercury in Italian medication; but in France, where the use of vegetable remedies and especially of *lignum vitæ* was prevalent, the accidental symptoms of the malady differed in an essential manner, which permits us to advance the theory that the plague of Naples, as it went further away from its source, had become exclusively venereal and had been disengaged from the leprosy, the farcin, or any other contagious affections with which it had previously formed an adulterous alliance.

We shall not pursue any further this subject of the degenerescences of the plague of Naples; we have desired merely to make it understood that the leprosy always persisted under the mask of this new malady, and that climate, temperament and local circumstances exercised an intimate influence over both the causes and the effects of the malady. It would be futile to attempt to demonstrate otherwise the terrible effects of public debauchery at this epoch on the health of those who indulged in it. It cannot be denied that the malady was of so contagious a nature that contagion might occur in many cases without the venereal act, which served as its ordinary vehicle; but the opinion grew that if the flu found its way in some manner or other into respectable households, the cause was inevitably to be attributed to the facts of Prostitution. The frequenting of women of evil life was never more dangerous than during the fifty years which followed the first appearance of the flu, for it was not until a good while later that the suspicion arose that this flu, born of some impure relation, was transmitted more surely and more rapidly by sexual relations than by any other contact. Manners were more regular in France than in Italy, and the debauchees, for whose needs the houses of Prostitution had been opened, lived absolutely beyond the circle of common life. It was among them that the plague of Naples made its first ravages, without medicine and surgery deigning to occupy themselves with the victims by treating them, since such a treatment was looked upon as useless for the patient and shameful for the practitioner. A few ill-famed scholars, apothecaries and old procuresses, who charged heavily for their

consultations and their drugs, ventured to treat the *pauvres vérolés*, as they were called, and they sometimes worked cures with the aid of empirical recipes known from time immemorial in the treatment of pustulous maladies. But it was not till 1527 that a true physician, Jacques de Bethencourt, dared to compromise himself to the point of publishing his researches and advice on the question of syphilis in a small book entitled *Nouveau Carême de Pénitence ou Purgatoire du Mal Vénérien* (*Nova penitentialis Quadragesima necnon purgatorium in morbum gallicum seu venereum*). Before Jacques de Bethencourt, a single French physician, who has preserved his anonymity, ventured to add a *remedy against the gross vérole* to his French paraphrase of the *Regimen Sanitatis* of Arnoul de Villeneuve, published at Lyons in 1501. One might think, from the fashion in which the medical art stood aloof from the plague of Naples, that this formidable plague had not entered France, whereas, as a matter of fact, it was everywhere widespread, despite all the efforts of the religious, political and municipal authorities. It must be observed, however, that the malady rarely attacked respectable folk, and that it concentrated rather on those classes reproved by society, the women of an evil life, the vagabonds, the beggars, the loafers, and the infamous guests of the Courts of Miracles.

We find, in the records of the Parliament of Paris, under date of the 16th of March, 1497, an ordinance which informs us that the Bishop of Paris (this office was then filled by a venerable prelate named Jean Simon) had taken the initiative in measures of health which looked to the prevention of the propagation of the *grosse vérole*. This contagious malady, "which, for two years past, has had great course in this realm, as well in this city of Paris as in other places," struck fear in the members of the medical profession, the fear that it would spread still more when springtime came. As the consequence, the Bishop had convoked, at the episcopal residence, the officers of the King en Châtelet, in order to submit to them his apprehensions on this score; it was decided that the matter should be referred to Parliament, and the court having been convened for the deliberation, delegated

one of the royal counsellors, Martin de Bellefaye and his clerk to further the charitable aims of the Bishop and to confer on this subject with the provost of Paris. Parliament enacted an ordinance which was published in the streets and public places, and which contained the police measures concerning the new malady. These measures had been discussed in the presence of the Bishop of Paris, by many "great and notable personages of all estates" (*grandes et notables personnages de tous estatz*). Strangers, men as well as women, who were suffering with the grosse vérole were to leave the city twenty-four hours after the publication of the ordinance, under pain of the rope; that they were to return either to their native country or to the place where they resided when the malady attacked them in order to facilitate their prompt departure; there was to be delivered to them as soon as they had left the gates of Saint-Denis or Saint-Jacques, the sum of four Parisian sols, their names being taken in writing and each being forbidden to reenter the city until he had been cured. As to the victims who resided and dwelt in Paris at the time they had been taken with the malady, they were enjoined to retire into their own houses, "without going any more about the city, by day and by night," under pain of the rope. If these victims, relegated to their own domicile, were poor and indigent they might appeal to the curés and church wardens of their parishes, who would provide them with the means of livelihood. On the other hand, those victims who had no asylum were required to return to the faubourg Saint-Germain-de-Prés, where a house had been rented and placed at their disposal to serve as their hospital. Still other dwellings (*demourances*) had been prepared elsewhere for poor women victims, who were less numerous than the men, but who undoubtedly out of shame, endeavored to conceal as long as possible the state of their health. It had already been foreseen that the provisory hospital of Saint-Germain-de-Prés would not be sufficient, on account of the increase in the number of patients, and the authorities promised to add to it granges and other neighboring places, in order that it might be capable of receiving all the poor ones who presented themselves. The expenses of

these new leper-houses rested upon the city, where censuses were taken and a special tax was levied at need. Two responsible agents were to be placed, the one at the Porte Saint-Jacques, the other at the Porte Saint-Denis in order to deliver the four Parisian sols and to inscribe the names of those who received the indemnity as they left the city. Guards were placed at all the gates of Paris in order that the victims might not return, *openly* or *secretely*. The most important article of the ordinance is the eighth, which is couched thus: "Item, the provost of Paris shall order the examiners and the sergeants, in the quarters where they are in charge, not to suffer nor to permit any of these sick to go, converse or communicate in the city. And wherever they shall find any, they shall put them out of the city, or they shall lead them to prison, to be punished corporally according to the said ordinance."

This article proves that the *grosse vérole* was looked upon as a sort of pestilence and that, from this epoch, there had been organized in Paris a service of public health with examiners (*examineurs*) and *sergeants*, attached to each quarter of the city, and charged with seeing that the sanitary regulations were rigorously observed. There was, however, no belief in the possibility of the air being infected, since the sick were authorized to remain in the city, provided they remained shut up in their own houses. It is probable that the houses where the sick dwelt were called to public attention by means of some external sign, such as a bundle of straw suspended from one of the windows, or it may be, a cross of black wood nailed on the door. At least, one designation of this sort was demanded of those who dwelt in houses *infected* by the *pestilence*, by an ordinance of the provost of Paris under date of the 16th of November, 1510. Although this ordinance and those of a later date relative to epidemics do not prescribe any measure of prudence regarding the places of debauchery, it is certain that these places had to be evacuated and that the doors were sealed until the state of public health had improved. It was the same with the sweating rooms, which were closed throughout the contagion. In the course of the spring

of 1497, the number of those suffering from the *gross vérole* increased considerably, as the good Bishop had foreseen. "On Friday, the 5th of May, the Court of Parliament levied the sum of 60 Parisian pounds (about 300 francs in our money) on the budget of fines, and caused this sum to be sent to Sire Nicolas Potier and others, commissioned touching the fact of the *malades de Naples*, this sum to be employed in the affairs and necessities of the said malades." The records of Parliament, in which we find this fact reported, also mentioned, under date of the 27th of May of the same year, the remonstrances which the Bishop of Paris addresses to the Messieurs, to demand of them an "alms in pity" (*aumône en pitié*), stating that if, of the patients recieved in the hospital of the faubourg Saint-Germain "there were a great number who had been cured," there were others who were still suffering cruel depravations, for "silver was lacking and small alms were required for the present." The clerk of the court offered to devote to these "pitiable works" (*oeuvres pitéables*) fifteen or sixteen crowns (about 200 francs), which had been placed at the disposition of his office for at least ten years past and which had never been claimed for any purpose. The court ordered that this sum be sent to the Bishop. This document proves that public charity had commenced to grow lax, probably for the reason that the ordinary cause of the malady was not one calculated to edify the good souls. As to the sick who had been cured, it is to be presumed that they were not true venereals, and that many beggars had passed themselves off for sick in order to share the benefit of those four Parisian sols.

In short, the hopes which had been conceived following the Bishop's letter to Parliament were not realized, and the numerous cures which this letter claimed, merely led to an increase of patients. The healthy population of Paris became frightened and loudly demanded the expulsion of these foreign plague victims, who were a horror to see. The provost of Paris was forced to listen to this unanimous demand, and he caused to be cried to the sound of the trumpet, the following ordinance (*Regist, Bleu du Châtelet* fol. 3): "Whereas it has before been published, cried

and ordained to the sound of the trumpet and by public cry, through the streets of Paris, so that none may pretend cause of ignorance; that all those sick with the grosse vérole should at once leave the city and go away, the foreigners into places of which they are natives, and that the others also should leave the city, under pain of the rope; nevertheless, the said sick, in contempt of the said cries, have returned from all parts and are conversing throughout the city, with healthy persons, which is a dangerous thing for the people and for the seigneurie which is at present at Paris: it is therefore decreed by the King and by monsieur the provost of Paris, to all the said sick of the said malady, men as well as women, that immediately after this present cry, they shall void and depart from the said city and suburbs of Paris, and shall go away, the said foreigners to make their residence in the countries and places of which they are natives, and the others beyond the walls and suburbs of the said city, under pain of being thrown into the river if they are taken, the next day. It is also enjoined on all the commissaires, quarteniers and sergeants to take or cause to be taken those who shall be found to inflict execution upon them. Done this Monday, the 25th day of June, of the year 1498." This ordinance, which admitted no excuse, no delay and no exception, had been motivated by the presence at Paris of all the nobility (*seigneurie*), who had come to offer their homages to the new King, Louis XII, and who were frightened at meeting so many sick, who could hardly be compelled to keep their houses; for their malady, however horrible it may have been, did not prevent them from movement and from enjoying the open air. Infractions of the police laws on the part of well-to-do bourgeoisie might have been winked at, had it not been that it was perceived the sight of them, looking as they did like a mass of living rottenness, would cause the city to be detested: "There was nothing but ulcers upon them," says Sauval, appropriating the expressions of Fernel, "ulcers which might have been taken for glands, to judge by their size and color, from which issued a villainous and infected mud which almost made the heart stop beating; their faces were greenish-black and other-

wise so covered with wounds, with scars and pustules, that nothing more hideous could possibly have been seen." (*Antiq. de Paris*, Volume III, page 27.) The learned Fernel, who lived at the end of the sixteenth century, adds that this venereal malady was so little like the one he knew in his day, that he could hardly believe it was the same. "This malady," remarked in 1539 the pseudonymous author of the *Triomphe de Très-Haulte et Très Puissante Dame Vérole*, "has lost much of its first acute ferocity and the peoples are not so belabored with it as they were."

The decree of Parliament of the sixth of March, 1497 (1496, according to the Pascalian calendar), leaves no doubt that the plague of Naples had reigned throughout the realm from the year 1494, but the date of its invasion of each particular province and city had not yet been determined. The municipal and consular archives furnish a number of precise documents on this point. Astruc, in his great monograph, has cited only two facts which indicate the introduction of the plague of Naples among the Romans at Dauphine and at Puy en Velay in the year 1496: "The malady of *las bubas*," say the records of the University of Manosque, "was brought that year by certain Roman soldiers in Dauphine, who were in the service of the King and of the most illustrious Duke of Orleans, into the city, their fatherland, which was still healthy and which had not yet made the acquaintance of this malady, a malady which no longer reigned in Provence." In an unpublished chronicle of the city of Puy en Velay, the author, Estève de Mèges, a bourgeois of that city (reports that the *grosse vérole* had appeared for the first time at Puy in the course of the year 1496. The extract from the records of Manosque is very precious in that it tends to prove that the army of Charles VIII, on its return from the expedition to Naples, had been infected with a new malady, and that this malady had manifested itself in the year 1495 all along the route followed by the debris of this army, which returned to France in disorganized bands after the battle of Fornoua. The soldiers who brought the plague of Naples to the Romans had, undoubtedly, formed a part of the rear guard who shut themselves in Novare with the Duke of Orleans, and who

there sustained a memorable siege for a number of months. Since the time that Astruc revised the material of this encyclopedia of the venereal maladies, a more conscientious study of the municipal archives all over France has permitted the establishment of the fact that the plague of Naples had spread from city to city and even to the smallest hamlets from the year 1494, a date which agrees with the decree of the Parliament of Paris, in which it is stated, under date of the 6th of March, 1497, that "the *grosse vérole* has had great course in this realm, for the past two years (that is to say, 1495 and 1496)." Only in the great cities like Paris was the rigorous treatment employed in the case of the victims, who were expelled and threatened with the lash and the gibbet; but elsewhere, the public was content with avoiding and fleeing them, and they were left to die in peace. We do not believe, as more than one contemporary assures us, that the twentieth part of the population of France and of Europe was carried away by the epidemic; but, as Antonius Coccius Sabellicus wrote in 1502: "Few die of it, considering the great number of sick, but many less among the sick are cured." Ulric de Hutten, who had believed that he was cured, and who succumbed to the latent progress of the malady at the age of 36 years, himself said that, of one hundred patients, barely a single one was cured, while a patient frequently fell back into a state that was worse than his former one. (*De Morbi Gall. Curatione*, Chapter 4.) Life was more frightful than death for these unfortunate ones, who did not possess the right to live in the society of their kind and who found neither physical remedy nor moral solace for their atrocious sufferings.

At the time of the first appearance of the plague of Naples, it might be stated that it was very unprofessionally treated; physicians almost everywhere abstained from treating it, declaring like Bartolemeo Montagnana, professor of Medicine in the University of Padua, that this malady was unknown to Hippocrates, to Galen, to Avicenna, and to other ancient physicians; they had, moreover, an insurmountable aversion to the leprosy, of which the syphilis was a survival. Moreover, this shameful malady

appeared to be concentrated in the abject classes, in a class which nourished so many villainous infirmities in its bosom, and there would have been little advantage in undertaking the treatment of such infirmities, born of vice, misery and debauchery. "In the cure of maladies," they said, draping themselves in their doctoral majesty, "there must first be some indication of the essence of the malady; and no indication can be drawn from a disease which is absolutely unknown." The French physicians were still more indifferent or more ignorant than those of Germany, and of Italy; they entirely abandoned to chalatanes of all sorts the cure (*curation*) of this malady, which appeared to them to be an insoluble problem. It was this general desertion on the part of professional men which provoked the intervention of a multitude of intruders in the field of venereal treatment; after the barbers and the apothecaries, the sweating-room and bathhouse keepers, the cordwainers and cobblers became operators. Hence the various drugs, so many different methods, so many fruitless attempts at cure, so many ridiculous processes, before anyone dared to employ mercury or quicksilver, before there was any knowledge of the virtues of *linum-vitæ*. Bleedings, ablutions, plasters, purgatives, decoctions played their more or less neutral role, as in the majority of maladies; but massages, baths and sudorifics met with better success, at least apparently. "The best means that I have found of curing the pains and even the pustules," wrote Torrella, who had experimented in France with anodynes, "is to make the patient sweat in a hot oven or at least in a stove during fifteen successive days, the patient fasting the while." In France, there was also a prodigious use of the panacea which it was thought was to be derived from the viper: a wine in which vipers had been infused and left to die; bouillon of vipers, flesh of vipers, boiled or roasted, decoctions of vipers—all were employed. It was the surgeons who came to make use of mercury in their efforts to achieve an energetic form of treatment for a malady which appeared to resist all treatment. Their daring efforts met with success, but the ignorance or imprudence of the operators who employed mercury in strong doses, occasioned terrible

accidents, and many patients who did not die of the malady, died of the remedy. Torrella attributes to the effects of mercury the death of the Cardinal of Cirgobia and of Alphonso Borgia.

A remedy less dangerous and more certain was then sought; it was generally believed that it had been found when chance led to the discovery in America of the antisymphilitic properties of *lignum-vitae*. Ulric de Hutten, who had been one of the first to experience the efficacy of this remedy, relates that a Spanish gentleman, treasurer of a province of the Island of San Domingo, being very ill of the French plague, learned from a native of this remedy, and brought to Europe the prescription which had given him back his health. Ulric de Hutten assigns to the year 1515 or 1517 the importation of *lignum-vitae* into Europe. This fact is differently reported in accordance with local traditions, in the notes on the curious *Voyages* of Jerome Benzoni (edition of Frankfort, 1594): "A Spaniard, who had contracted the syphilis with a native concubine, and who suffered from it cruel pains, having drunk of the water of *lignum-vitae*, which had been given to him by an Indian servant, was not only delivered of his pains but also permanently cured." From this epoch (1515-1517), the rumor spread throughout Europe that the plague of Naples might finally be cured with a drug that came from America, and from then on the people, who indulged in strange confusion in their oral chronicles, became persuaded that the remedy and the plague might have originally come from the same country. The name of *plague of Naples* and *French plague* could not long survive this belief, which tended to find the cradle of the plague under the tree which was its cure. The name of *grosse vérole* and *vérole* came to be employed as the terms par excellence in restoring to America what it was commonly believed was hers by right. The first cures due to the use of *lignum-vitae* were marvelous. Nicolas Poll, physician of Charles V, affirms that three thousand desperate patients were cured under his eyes, thanks to a decoction of *lignum-vitae*, and that their cure resembled a resurrection. The great Erasmus who had been attacked by a terrible syphilis, accompanied with frantic pain, excostoses, ul-

cers and caries of the bone, after having eleven times the mercurial treatment, was radically cured by *lignum-vitae* by the end of thirty days. The *lignum-vitae* was then looked upon as a blessing from heaven, but the public was not slow in perceiving that this blessing was accompanied by grave inconveniences; venereal disease was often followed, in such a case, by a mortal consumption. Nevertheless, the *lignum-vitae* had numerous partisans until it came to be dethroned by another wood, also a product of America, and called by the natives of the country *hoaxacan*, which the Europeans call "holy wood" (*bois saint-sanctum lignum*). The latter remedy had more vogue in France than anywhere else; and during a part of the sixteenth century, there was immense consumption of this aromatic wood, which frequently justified its happy name by the extraordinary cures it wrought. For twenty-four hours the patient was given an infusion of holy wood, cut up into fragments or grated; the decoction was taken on an empty stomach for fifteen or thirty days in succession, and produced abundant sweats, which reduced the acridity of the disease and sometimes carried the disease off with them. The French physicians have written many treatises on the efficacy of *lignum-vitae* and holy wood; they speak of it with a sort of respect and pious admiration, but they do no more than repeat the eulogies which Ulric de Hutten in Germany, and Francesco Delgado in Italy, had been the first to accord to this marvelous specific, in recognition of their own cures. "Oh, holy wood!" cried in his prayers one patient, who had been relieved, if not cured, by the happy effects of this medicine, "oh, holy wood, are you not indeed the blessed wood of the cross of the good thief!"

The cure obtained by holy wood or by *lignum-vitae* was not, however, so radical as to cause all traces of the malady wholly to disappear; those unfortunate ones who had escaped the acute stage of the disease were recognizable by all too certain signs, and were unable to escape the incessant and mysterious effects of the malady. Following is a sombre picture sketched by one of the supposed convalescents, the anonymous author of the *Triumphe de la Très-Haute et Très-Puissante Dame Véroles* "Some are bud-

ding out, others are melting and corpulent, others are full of lachrimose fistulas, while others are all running with twisted drops." The same author, who endeavors to teach continence and wisdom to his readers by offering them "the example of those unfortunate ones who fall by their dissolute lust into the said accidents," pictures for them also the not less frightful preliminaries of the plague of Naples: "The others being still in the suburbs of the syphilis, well laden with chancres, warts, filaments, *chauldes pisses*, chanceroous bumps, superfluous carnosities and other slight trash which one acquires and amasses in the service of Dame Lechery." A long time before this singular work was published at Lyons (1539), under the pseudonym of Martin Dorchesino, French poetry had made use of the lamentable subject which Jerome Fracastor celebrated in his beautiful virgilian and venereal poem bearing the name of the malady itself (*Syphilis Sive Morbus Gallicus*). Jean Droin of Amiens, bachelor at law, and a versifier known for two moral and Christian poems, the *Nef des Fols du Monde* and the *Vie des Trois Maries*, composed a ballade in honor of the grosse v role, and this ballade, after having made the rounds of France with the new malady, was printed at Lyons in 1512 at the end of the moral poems of Brother Guillaume-Alexis, monk of Lyre, and Prior of Bussy. The *Ballade* of Ma tre Jean Droin is very curious in that it accused Prostitution of having spread the plague of Naples in France, the burden of which the poet placed upon the conscience of the Lombards, from which we may conclude that the wars of Louis XII in Italy had been even more funereal in their effect upon the health of his subjects than the preceding expedition of Charles VIII. We believe that the citation of this piece of verse will not be out of place here, as a monument of the joyous philosophy of our ancestors on the subject of pestilence and pleasure.

*Phaisants mignons, gorriers, esperrucats,
Pensez   vous, amendez votre cas,
Craignez les trous, car ils sont dangereux,
Gentilshommes, bourgeois et advocats,
Qui despendez ecus, salus, ducas,*

*Faisant banquetz, esbattement et jeux,
Ayez resgard que c'est d'estre amoureux,
Et le mettez en vostre protocole,
Car, pour hanter souvent en obscurs lieux,
S'est engendrée ceste grosse vérole.*

*Menez amours sagement, par compas:
Quand ce viendra a prendre le repas,
Veüe a yez nette devant les yeux,
Fuyez soussi et demenez soulas,
Et de gaudir jamais ne soyez las,
En acquerant hault renom vertueux.
Gardez vous bien de hanter gens rongneux,
Ne gens despitz, qui sont de haulte colle;
Car, pour bouter sa lance en aulcun creux,
S'est engendrée ceste gross vérole.*

*Hantez mignones qui portent grans estas,
Mais gardez-vous de monter sur le tas
Sans chandelle; ne soyez point honteux,
Fouillez, jettez, regardez hault et bas,
Et, en après, prenez tous vos esbats;
Faites ainsi que gens aventureux,
Comme dien un grant tas de baveux,
Soyez lettrez sans aller à l'eschole,
Car, par Lombards soubtils et cauteleux,
S'est engendrée ceste grosse vérole.*

ENVOI:

*Prince, sachez que Job fut vertueux,
Mais si fut-il rongneux et grateleux,
Nous lui prions qu'il nous garde et console.
Pour corriger mondains luxurieux,
S'est engendrée ceste grosse vérole.**

*This piece is extremely difficult to render in a form which will suggest, at once, something of the sound and the sense of the original. The following does not pretend to be a finished translation. For instance, it has been deemed

According to the poetic rules of the French ballade, these three symmetrical strophes had to end with an *envoy* of five verses, addressed to a *prince*; we shall not trouble to say to what prince the ballade of Droin was addressed, and it is our opinion that not a prince at the epoch, however austere he might have been, would have protested against such an envoy, all the more so that the reason that the numerous medical treatises which were appearing upon the medical evil were dedicated to cardinals, bishops, and to the most august personages. But we shall find material

best to keep the French *grosse vérole*, despite the incongruity of rhyming French and English words, since *syphilis* is a rhyme which would keep even Mr. Walker up all night.

Pleasant lads of syphilitic state,
Think of yourselves and mend your fate;
Beware of holes, they're a dangerous chance.
Then, gentlemen, bourgeois and advocate,
You who your health and ducats dissipate
In banquets and in dalliance,
Just see what happens in love's trance,
And put it in your protocol.
For if in dark places you must prance,
You're sure to get the *grosse vérole*.

Then in your loves be wise, sedate,
And when you eat, see that the plate
Is clean in every circumstance;
Flee care and always be elate,
With a joy that nothing can abate,
And seek what will your name enhance
By staying far from miscreants,
Since that is better on the whole.
If you should wrongly cast a lance,
You're sure to get the *grosse vérole*.

Haunt then those whom the world calls great,
But do not enter any gate
Without a candle; let your glance
Roam high and low in some debate;
Then take your pleasure with your mate
And equal all the arrogance
And all the gay exuberance
Of those unschooled who play their role.
But beware of a Lombard countenance,
Or you're sure to get the *grosse vérole*.

ENVOI

Remember, Prince, Job's temperance;
Though he had many a protuberance,
We pray him still to keep us and console.
It is for morals' maintenance
You're sure to get the *grosse vérole*.

for other historical observations in our examination of this ballade, which is certainly the most ancient poem which the plague of Naples inspired in a Frenchman; we see from it, for example, that the malady always betrayed itself by some external sign, and that the victims always bore some stigma of their defilement; we shall see, moreover, that, in the opinion of the *mondains luxurieux*, this species of obscene *rogne* was engendered by carnal conjunction, etc. It is astonishing to encounter so much justness of observation in a poet at a period when the physicians themselves believed that the disease was propagated through the air and by simple contact; the prejudice on this score was even more strongly established among the people, who, in their own good sense, compared the syphilis with the leprosy, the daughter with the mother. Two centuries later, the Abbot at Saint-Martins, who was the living expression of all the popular prejudices, repeated naïvely what had been told him by his nurse, and what he attributed to his friend Jean de Lorme, the first physician to the King: "It is to be remarked that the vérole is contracted by touching a person who has it, in sleeping with one who has it, in walking barefoot upon his spit, and in many other manners." (*Moyens faciles et epo ruvez dont M. de Lorme, premier medecin et ordinaire de trois de nos roys . . . s'est servi pour vivre tres de cent ans.* Caen, 1682, in-12, p. 341).

Jean Droin was not the only French poet to sing of the plague of Naples before Fracastor. Jean Le Maire de Belges, a friend of Clement Marot and of Francois Rabelais, historiographer and poet *indiciaire* of Margaret of Austria, translated into rhyme a *conte* entitled *Cupido et Atropos*, which Serephino had published in Italian verse on the strange and hideous effects of this contagion born of pleasure; he added to the original *conte* two other *comptes* of his own invention, equally allegoric and devoted to the quarrel of Love and Death. We borrow from the work of Jean Le Maire, which appeared in 1520, a portrait vigorously sketched of the ravages of this malady among those who were tainted with it:

*Mais, en la fin, quand le venin fut meur,
 Il leur naissoit de gros boutons sans fleur,
 Si très hideux, si laids et si énormes,
 Qu'on ne vit onc visages si difformes,
 N'onc ne receut si très mortelle injure
 Nature humaine en sa belle figure.
 Au front, au col, au menton et au nez,
 Onc on ne vit tant de gens boutonnez.
 Et qui pis est, ce venin tant nuisible,
 Par sa malice occulte et invisible,
 Alloit chercher les veines et artères,
 Et leur causoit si estranges mystères,
 Dangier, douleur de passion et goutte,
 Qu'on n'y savoit remède, somme toute,
 Hors de crier, souspirer, lamenter,
 Plorer et plaindre et mort souhaiter.**

Jean Le Maire, who was, as a poet, the elegant precursor of Clement Marot, his disciple, introduced into his verses, which were often well turned, the omnilingual nomenclature of the villainous *gorre* which the wits of the time called the *souvenir*, in memory of the conquest of Naples, where the French army had contracted it. Three allegorical tales of Cupid and Atropos were reprinted in 1539 at the head of the *Triumphe de Très Haute et Très Puissante Dame Vérole Royne du Poy d'Amours*. This tri-

*But in the end when the venom showed its power,
 There grew upon them great buds without flower,
 So hideous and of such enormity
 That one never saw faces of such deformity,
 Nor never did the nature of man receive
 An indignity which caused it so to grieve.
 On brow, on neck, on chin and on the nose,
 In every spot, a horrible bud grows,
 And, what is worse, this venom very keen
 Thrives by a malice hidden and unseen;
 Going to seek the arteries and veins,
 It gives them strange and very mysterious pains,
 A dangerous, dolorous and passionate gout,
 For which there is no remedy, I doubt,
 Except to cry and sigh and spend your breath,
 Complain and implore and fiercely long for death.

umph is none other than a series of thirty-four wooden figures representing the principal accessories of the plague of Naples and its treatment; here we have Venus, Pleasure, Cupid; there the physicians or *refondeurs*, diet, etc. These figures, composed and executed in the taste of a Dance Macabre, are accompanied by rondeaux and by dixians and huitains very cleverly put together; so cleverly that the author, Martin Dorchesino, could have been none other than Rabelais, whose spirit and style have a mark so recognizable, and who, about this period, was a resident of Lyons, where he practiced medicine and composed joyous chronicles for the profit of *the pauvres goutteux et véroles tres preciaux* (poor beggars and very precious syphilitics).

Martin Dorchesino or d'Orchesino, who describes himself the "inventor of little honest pleasures" (*inventeur des menus plaisirs honêtes*), has the herald at arms cry, in his *Triumph*, published in 1539, at Lyons, by Francois Juste (*devant Nostre-Dame de Confort*):

*Sortez, saillez des limbes ténébreux,
Desournaulx chauds et sepulchres umbreux,
Où, pour suer, de gris et verd on gresse
Tous verolez! se goutte ne vous presse,
Nudz et vestuz, fault delaisser vos creux,
De toutes parts!**

Francois Rabelais, who describes himself as an "abstractor of the quintessence" (*abstracteur de quinte essence*), in his *Pantagruel*, published for the first time in 1535 by Francois Juste, who was also the publisher of the *Triumph*, had said: "What shall I say of those poor syphilitics and gouty ones? Oh, how many times have we seen them, at the hour when they were well oiled

*Come out from those dark purgatories,
Those steaming stoves and those dark mortal throes,
Where, to make them sweat, they grease with gray and green
All syphilitics! Unless your gout's too keen,
Naked or clad, you must yourselves disclose
On every side!

and greased to a point, and their faces shone like the key of a charnel-house, and their teeth trembled like the stops of an organ when one plays on it, and their gullets foamed like a wild boar whom the hunters have caught in the toils; what do they do then? all their consolation is but to hear read some page of the said book. And some there are whom we have seen who give themselves to the very Devil in case they do not feel some manifest assuagement at the reading of the said book, even though they were in Limbo itself; in no other manner than do certain women, being with child, when one reads them the Life of Saint Margaret.”†

These passages drawn from two works which we attribute to the same author, prove that syphilitic patients were numerous at Lyons in the clientèle of Rabelais, and that he treated them in the limboes (*limbes*) by means of mercurial frictions rather than with *lignum-vitæ* and holy wood.

It is in the *Triumph* that we find a souvenir of the venereal epidemic which had desolated the city of Rouen and the Province of Normandy in 1527, and which Jacques Bethencourt had treated with success, employing nothing but mercury. “Vérole, the bellicose Empress,” says Dorchesino in his *Prologue*, “draws after her triumphal chariot a number of great cities, taken by force and reduced to subjection, especially the city of Rouen, capital of Normandy, where she has won many followers, as they say, and published her laws and edicts most profusely.” This invasion of the malady, which made its appearance this time with

†The Urquhart and Motteux translation (which, of course, cannot be improved upon) of this passage is as follows:

“But what shall I say of those poor men that are plagued with the pox and the gout? O, how often have we seen them, even immediately after they were anointed and thoroughly greased, till their faces did glister like the key-hole of a powdering tub, their teeth danced like the jacks of a pair of little organs or virginals when they are played upon, and that they foamed from their very throat like a boar which the mongrel mastiff-hounds have driven in and overthrown amongst the toils,—what did they then? All their consolation was to have some page of the said jolly book read unto them, and we have seen those who have given themselves to a hundred puncheons of old devils, in case that they did not feel a manifest ease and assuagement of pain at the hearing of the said book read, even when they were kept in a purgatory of torment; no more nor less than women in travail used to find their sorrow abated when the life of St. Margaret is read unto them.

new symptoms, since children themselves were attacked by it, left a trace in the proverbial language, in which for a long time the phrase, *vérole de Rouen*, was employed to designate the worst variety and the one that most resisted treatment. The following verses were to be read above the image of the *Gorre de Rouen*:

*Sur toutes villes de renom
Où l'on tient d'amour bonne guyse,
Midieux Rouen porte le nom
De veroller la marchandise.
La fine fleur de paillardise,
On la doit nommer meshouen (maintenant):
Au Puy d'Amour prens ma devise:
Je suis la Gorre de Rouen!**

Rabelais, in his old age, remembered once more, in writing his fifth book of *Pantagruel*, this terrible *gorre* which he had perhaps observed upon the spot in 1527; for he cites, in his list of impossible things, the feat of a young "abstractor of quintessence" who boasted of being able to "cure the vérollez of Rouen, as you say." A century later, the proverb had survived the epidemic, and Sorel, in his romance of *Francion* (Book X), bore witness that "the *vérole* of Rouen and the dung of Paris are of one and the same piece."

Although a number of eminent personages and some of very honorable character had been, one does not know just how, the recognized victims of this immodest malady, it is difficult to deny the fact that Prostitution was the principal means of contagion, and that the bad houses served as a permanent seat of the most redoubtable varieties of the flu. Prostitution was by no means

*Among all cities of renown,
Where love goes brave and free,
There's none more famous than Rouen town,
For the fruits of venery.
If the fine flower you would see,
I bid you gaze upon
The Well of Love and its blazonry:
The syphilis of Rouen.

subjected to proper, sanitary regulations, and it is necessary to come down to 1684 in order to find an ordinance, the apparent object of which is the good health of the inmates of establishments of debauchery. It is easy to appreciate the evil effects which this carelessness on the part of the authorities could not fail to assert on the public health; for in abandoning to chance the unfortunate libertines who went, so to speak, to the very source of the evil, the authorities thereby exposed to inevitable dangers the legitimate wives of these imprudent ones and their poor children, to whom they bequeathed an incurable and hereditary virus. At the beginning of the epidemic, as we have seen, the patients were shut up in a sort of lazar houses, and they were expelled from the cities where their mere presence was looked upon as contagious. This general expulsion of the *pauvres véroles* contributed necessarily to the spread of the infection in the country.

But when experience had demonstrated the fact that the venereal evil could not be contracted except by carnal relations or by some intimate and immediate contact, no further inconvenience was seen in permitting these sad and shameful victims to go on sojourning in the cities and among healthy persons, since their very aspect was a warning against libertinism. There is no certain date between the assigned for this change in public opinion and in police regulations regarding the plague of Naples and the unfortunate ones who were afflicted with it. In the records of the Parliament of Paris, we read, under date of the 22nd of August, 1505, a decree which authorizes the taking from the budget of fines a sum necessary to the establishment of a house "for the lodging of syphilitics" (*pour y loger les vérolez*). This decree, the last which makes mention of these temporary hospitals, informs us that the asylum which had been opened for patients in the faubourg Saint-Germain was no longer sufficient. It may be supposed that, a few years afterward, under the sponsorship of the physicians, who had made a better study of the principle of the venereal maladies, those who had contracted at Paris either the grosse vérole or some other syphilitic taints were admitted along with the other patients without distinction. We pass thus from

one extremity to another and fall from one excess into a worse one. At the Hôtel-Dieu, the patients to the number of four and even six slept in the same bed; syphilis took a great number who had entered the hospital as the victims of fever or catarrh, and who left it crippled and *courbassés* by the syphilitic virus or by mercury. The list of patients, therefore, grew, although the malady had diminished in intensity. The Hôtel-Dieu of Paris was soon not large enough to contain them all; the authorities soon had to think of erecting new hospitals especially destined for venereal treatment. The first hospital was established in 1536, by decree of Parliament, upon the report of the commissioners charged with the policing of the poor. Two halls of the great Hospital de la Trinité were turned over for this purpose: The great upper hall, "where the custom was to play farces and games," was applied to "the lodging of the infected and syphilitic; the lower hall, to the lodging and retreat of those who are sick of the ringworm (*teignes*), of an evil which is called *Saint Main*, *Saint Fiacre*, and other contagious maladies."

A few months after the opening of this hospital, room was lacking to receive all the patients who presented themselves. Parliament, by decree of the third of March, 1537, ordered the church wardens of Saint Eustache to devote the hospital of the parish to the lodging of the "poor syphilitic sick of those maladies which are called Saint Main, Saint Fiacre and others of the same contagious maladies." But there was not yet at Paris, despite these foundations, a hospital exclusively reserved for the venereal malady, although the city of Toulouse had possessed one from the year 1528, called, in the language of the country, *l'hospital das rognousés de la rongo de Naples*. (See the *Mém. de l'Hist. du Languedoc*, by Guill. de Catel, p. 237.) As new refuges for the *pauvres malades de vérole* were opened, it became possible to determine the ravages of the malady among the lower classes, and especially among the vagabonds. Humanity counseled, for the solace of this suffering multitude, their removal from the sight of and contact with healthy folk and respectable people. Hospitals sprung up everywhere, and in them, as in prisons, were

accumulated all the poor who were thought to be afflicted with contagious maladies. The public came to repent, having suppressed too lightly police measures relating to lepers and syphilitics; a little later it was perceived that the difference between these maladies was, perhaps, not so great and the idea was conceived of instituting once more the old regime of lazaret houses. It was with this thought in mind that there was organized for the *povres vérollez* at Paris the great hospital of Saint-Nicolas, near the Bievre in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. But the resources of this hospital had not been calculated to accord with the daily increase with the number of patients, and this number had increased in 1540 to 660; the linen and other necessary things which the masters and governors of the Hôtel-Dieu were called upon to furnish, came to be wholly lacking. The Parliament of Paris took pity on these patients, "who were in great necessity;" it cited before it the masters and governors of the Hôtel-Dieu, and ordered them to provide for the needs of the hospital of Saint-Nicolas. (See the *Preuves de l'Hist. de Paris*, of Felibien and Lobineau, Vol. IV, p. 689 and 697.)

This hospital took the name of *Hôpital de Lourcines*, and to it were sent all the syphilitics who presented themselves at the Bureau of the Poor and at the Hôtel-Dieu of Paris, where, up to then, they had been "couched in the same bed with those not attainted with this malady." Such was the origin of the Hôpital des Veneriens, and a decree of Parliament under date of December 25, 1559, informs us that M. Pierre Galandius "had formerly been retained to keep" the said Hôpital de Lourcines, where were nourished, lodged, dressed and treated the "syphilitic folk" (*gens vérolés*.—*Preuves de l'Hist. de Paris*, Vol. IV, p. 788.) At the same time, an effort was launched to secure a privy charter for all the sick of this sort, and an effort was also made to have the wandering lepers return to the hospitals or lazaret houses; for these vagabonds had contributed all too much to corrupting the public health by being permitted to live freely in the midst of the healthy population. Francis I, by an ordinance of the 19th of December, 1543, desired to "remedy the great disorder" of these leper

houses, and he endeavored to confine in them, as had formerly been done, the begging lepers and those who clacked their sticks (*clique taient*) through the towns and villages. It was too late to restore to the State the goods belonging to public charity, which had been appropriated for more than a century by individuals. Moreover, of what use were leper houses when there were no more lepers? As a matter of fact, even those who carried the *cliquette* and casks were only recent or inveterate venereals. Leprosy and syphilis had made common cause, so much so that Henry IV, by an edict of 1606, assigned what remained of the leper houses "for the entertainment of poor gentlemen and crippled soldiers." But it is not evident that Henry IV, who suffered for more than ten years with a virulent gonorrhea looked upon the grosse vérole as a natural heir of leprosy, although he assigned certain revenue for the care of patients. At this epoch, all the syphilitics were not in the hospitals, and it might be said that Prostitution, which had peopled the Courts of Miracles, now took upon itself the task of depopulating them, by reviving in them incessantly the ancient virus of leprosy and the new virus of syphilis.

CHAPTER XXII

THE trouvères of the thirteenth century, as we have said, were the poets of Prostitution; their *lais* and their *fabliaux*, which reflected the license of their manners and the obscenity of their language, exercised a sorry influence over the written language, as over the manners of the people. Manners, instead of becoming purified, became still more perverted from the example of those who had won a place of honor by their smutty *contes*, which were greatly to the taste of the joyous French; the language not only remained laden with numerous vile words and immodest locutions, but it had also come to express by preference the commonplaces of carnal love, if we may designate thus the dull and monotonous outburst of poetic amorousness which was the delight of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The publishers of Rutebeuf, M. Achille Jubinal and his predecessor Méon, did not dare to publish, even by replacing free words with others, a number of singular pieces which tend to prove that this brazen trouvère did not concern himself greatly with respecting the ears of his auditors. We shall send those who are curious regarding this species of literature to the celebrated manuscript of the Imperial Library, Codex 7218, *Ancien Fonds du Roi*, in which they will find, in folio 215, the *Dit du c. et de la c.*, which begins thus:

*Une c. . . . et un v. . . . s'esmurent
A un marchié ou aller durent. . . .;*

or to folio 24, the *Dit des c.*, addressed to a seigneur who is a little more delicate, the beginning of which we give:

*Signor, qui les bons c. . . . savés,
Qui savés que li c. . . . est tels. . . .;*

or to folio 183, the *Dit du c. et du c.*, the first two verses of which herald a licentious controversy:

*L'autre hier, me vint en avison
Que li c. . . . demandoit au c. . . .*

The obscene terms and indecent images, which the trouvères so readily employed, would not have been out of place perhaps, in the *contes gaillards*; but by force of habit, we see them figuring also in the most serious and even the most moral works. We have already cited a number of passages from an ancient translation of the Bible, in order to show how the profane writers and poets always smelled of the bad company they kept. This impropriety of words was, however, not perceptible to all the world, and many women of good life and manners, many grave men and venerable persons, pushed candor so far as not to be scandalized at these trivial or indecent locutions, which had crept at once into the written and spoken language. One must have possessed a degree of delicacy which would have been exceptional at this period to blush or take offense at this naïve grossness of expression, which custom had rendered almost universal, as the words of writers passed into the common speech.

Following is the manner in which the wise *preude dame* Christine de Pisan defends herself of the charge of having stained her poetic and moral works with this shameful Prostitution of language. She replies, to the "very notable and sufficient persons," Maître Gontier Col, secretary to King Charles V: "You assert that, without reason I blame what is said in the *Roman de la Rose*, in the chapter on REASON, where it names the secret members of men by their names, and relates there what I formerly said elsewhere: that God had created all things good, but by the sinful pollution of our first parents, man had become an unclean thing; and I gave the example of Lucifer, whose name is beautiful and whose person is horrible; and in conclusion I said that the name did not give indecency to the thing, that the thing made the name dishonest; and from this, you say that I am like the pelican,

which slays with its beak. So draw your conclusions and say: if the thing then makes the name dishonest, what name can I give to the thing which would not be dishonest? To this I will reply, grossly and without saying any more, for to tell the truth I am no logician: there is no need of such discussions. I must confess to you that I am in no manner able to speak of indecency or corrupted will and that whatever name I may give even to the secret members or any other indecent thing, that name is not dishonest, and always if, in certain cases of malady or other necessity, it becomes necessary to speak of it I shall speak of it in a manner that will show what I desire to say, and I shall not speak of it indecently."

Christine de Pisan did not hesitate to enter upon a very arduous and thorny dissertation regarding the cases in which it is permissible to name by their names the indecent things, and she ended by establishing the principle that indecency of heart alone gives indecency to expression; but in treating this difficult subject, she did not perceive that she herself had fallen into the very fault with which she reproaches Jean de Meung and the poets of his school. For she herself makes use of low and indecent words which contrast with the purity of her intention. The *Roman de la Rose*, which Christine de Pisan attacks thus in her epistles (*Ms de la Bibl. Imp.*, codex 7217, Ancien Fonds), might have been accused with good right of having exerted an unfortunate influence over modesty of language and over the state of public manners. It might be said, however, that the *Roman de la Rose* was for more than two centuries the gospel of French gallantry.

The author of the first part of this famous romance, Guillaume de Lorris, who died toward the end of the thirteenth century, leaving his poem uncompleted, had intended to compose, under an allegoric form, a sort of *Art of Love* in the taste of his time; nevertheless, he was not blind to the dangers of a passion which is sometimes a terrible and incurable evil:

*Rien n'y vaut herbe ne racine;
Seul fuir en est la médecine.**

He knew, perhaps by experience, that the love which he had painted under such seductive colors was epidemic among the poets of the age:

*Maints y perdent, bien dire l'oz,
Sens, temps, chastel, corps, ame et loz†*

Guillaume de Lorris had need to mitigate the voluptuous contagion of his subject by reflections full of wisdom and by a wealth of noble sentiments; but he failed in his object, and the foolish youths who became enthusiastic over the *Roman de la Rose*,

Où l'art d'amour est tout enclose,‡

sought in it for examples of libertinism rather than for precepts of virtue and morality. The poet paused in his erotic work, after having finished four thousand verses; another poet then came forward to complete the work. Jean de Meung, called Clopinel, because he was lame, continued the romance which had been begun by Guillaume de Lorris. Jean de Meung undoubtedly departed from the original plan. The author no longer prided himself on drawing his inspiration from Ovid and the classic poets of love; under pretext of morality and satire, he hurled himself into a dirty torrent of insults to women, and in order to save his readers from the dangerous reefs of gallantry, he could conceive nothing better than to show them in the nude, so to speak, all the amorous snares of those sirens who strove to betray at once the souls and bodies of their victims. Jean de Meung was, certainly, not a Dominican monk, as had been supposed from the fact that he had been shut up in the cloister of the Jacobin convent in the

*No herb or root will cure the ill;

To flee it is the only pill.

†Many there lose, to tell the truth,

Sense, soul and body to their ruth.

‡Where the art of love is all contained.

rue Saint-Jacques. He was a doctor and a master of arts of the University of Paris; for his apologist, the Prior of Salon, pictures him for us as seated in his garden of la Tournelle and clad in a cape furred in ermine, "like some man of honor," as the bibliographer, Antoine Du Verdier, remarks. He had learned, in the schools to call things by their names, and he made no scruples, despite his good intentions, of employing the most obscene terms, and of painting love under the most lubricious colors, disdaining every sort of veil. He boasted, nevertheless, despite the intemperance of his verse of being an honest seigneur.

*Au coeur gentil, au coeur isnel (dispos).**

But if the *Roman de la Rose* was the favored reading of young libertines, the ladies and the demoiselles who also read it in secret, could not pardon the author for having outraged them, notably in a long declamation against the feminine sex which ends with these two verses:

*Saiges femmes, par Saint Denis!
En est autant que de phénix.†*

These ladies, those of the court particularly, resolved to chastise him with their own hands, for the judgment he had passed on them rested on their hearts, a rather rigorous judgment, which the poet had dared to pronounce against their sex in general:

*Toupes estes, serez ou fustes,
De faict ou de volenté, putes.‡*

The vengeance of the ladies has been related by André Thevet in the *Vrais Portraits et Vies des Hommes Illustres* (Paris, Kerver, 1584, two volumes, in fol.); and the tradition relating to

*Of gentle heart, heart well disposed.

†Wise women? By St. Denis, where?

The phoenix itself is not more rare.

‡All are, will be or have been

Whores in fact or will, I ween.

this occurrence was so widespread that Antoine du Verdier, Sire of Vaupripas, who published almost at the same time, at Lyons, his *Bibliothèque Francoise*, has related in it the misadventure of Jean Clopinel. The narrative of du Verdier is much better known than that of André Thevat; it is also more circumstantial, and it is this latter reason especially which induces us to reproduce it textually here, in order to prove that from the time of Phillip the Handsome the ladies of the court possessed no better a renown than the amorous ones of the profession:

“Maître Jean de Meung, having come to the court for some occasion, was by the ladies arrested in one of the chambers of the King’s dwelling, being environed with a number of seigneurs, who, to win the good graces of the fair ones, had promised to aid and not to prevent the punishment which they desired to execute; but Jean de Meung, beholding them with rods in their hands and pressing the gentlemen to make him strip, he required of them to bestow upon him a gift, swearing that he would not ask a remission of the punishment which they intended to inflict upon him (which he had not merited), but which, on the contrary, would advance it. The which was accorded him at some pain and on the instant prayer of the seigneurs. Then Maître Jean began to say: ‘Mesdames, since it seems that I must receive chastisement, that chastisement should come from those whom I have offended. Now, have I not spoken only of the misdoers, and not of you, since all of you here are beautiful, wise and virtuous; and so, why not let the one among you who feels that she has been the most offended begin by striking me, as being the strongest whore among all those whom I have blamed.’ He could not find among them a single one who desired to have this honor, fearing to bear that infamous title, and so Maître Jean escaped, leaving the ladies in shame and giving to the seigneurs there present great enough occasion for laughter, for there were among them those who felt that this or that lady should have been the one to begin.”

The *Roman de la Rose*, in which erotic details and obscene words abound, was to the French of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, what Ovid’s poem had been for the Romans. It was

to be found transcribed upon beautiful parchment and adorned with miniatures in all the *librairies* of the hôtels and châteaux. It was known by heart and quoted on every occasion, and from it were drawn, as from a well of refined gallantry, all instructions in the art of love. But this celebrated romance, which had, nevertheless, a moral end, was still placed upon the index by the *preudes femmes* and by the *gens de bonne vie*; there was a multitude of poets and proseurs, who, undoubtedly under the inspiration of the ladies, came forward to refute its partial and indecent accusations.

The two most famous antagonists of the *Roman de la Rose* were Christine de Pisan and Martin Lefranc, who, while paying full tribute to the talent of the author, reproached him equally with injustice on the score of women and with having wallowed in the sty of Prostitution. Following is the judgment which the virtuous Christine pronounced upon this book, which she would have liked to have annihilated: "Since in it nature descends to evil, I say that it may be the cause of very abominable manners, comforting a dissolute life, a doctrine full of deceit, as of damnation, a public defamer, cause of suspicion and miscreancy, and the shame of many persons, full of error and very dishonest reading in many points."

Christine de Pisan lived at a period less depraved than that in which Jean de Meung had pictured the woman as "vessel, retreat and inn of all vices" (*vaissel, retrait, et héberge de tous vices*). Manners under the reign of Charles the Wise were more decent than during preceding reigns; nevertheless, civil Prostitution was a constant threat, as the good dame Christine says, who, in her *Cité des Dames*, desired to prove that her sex was better than the other in every species of merit, and who, in her *Livre des Trois Vertus*, gave lessons in morality and *preuderie* to women of all conditions. She did not forget even the women of evil life; she proposed to convert the latter to good and to restore to her the esteem of her neighbors along with her own self-respect: "Alas! without fail, every woman thus given to shame and sin ought well to desire to be put back in that estate, the which thing might

be arranged if she would, for, if she has a body strong enough to do evil and suffer so many mischances, she ought to be able to make use of it to gain her life; for if she were disposed as we have said, each one would willingly take her in, give her the means of livelihood, it being well seen to, however, that there came with her no ordure nor evil into any place, and so she might care for the bedridden and the sick, dwell in a little chamber in a good street and among good folk, and there live simply and soberly, if none ever saw her drunk and provided there did not come from her mouth any words of whorishness (*puterie*) nor indecency, but she being always very courteous, humble, gentle and of good service to all good folk, and seeing to it that no man attract her, for she would then lose all. And by this path she might serve God and gain her life, since one good denier is worth a hundred received in sin."

The project of reform conceived by Christine de Pisan to destroy Prostitution had no other effect than to cause the morality of its author to be more honored. Light women were not to be seen renouncing their degrading trade, waiting for public charity to place each one of them in a little chamber *in a good street* and to employ them in respectable labors. They remained what they had been, frequently drunken and disorderly, always quarrelsome and garrulous, always with obscene words in their mouths and living by the products of their sin. Christine had no more success in her attacks on Jean de Meung and the *Roman de la Rose*, which was always read and admired, and which continued to serve as a breviary of the amorous and of libertines. Martin Franc, the author of the *Champion des Dames*, failed equally in the war which he declared on erotic poetry, by taking the *Roman de la Rose* as a text for his moral declamations, the object of which was the defense of the feminine sex.

Martin le Franc was, it is said, provost and canon of the church of Leuse en Hainault; he had on this score nothing to do with the mysteries of women, but since he was a natural-born gallant and of a very courteous disposition, he took up the cause of the ladies in view of the insolences of Jean de Meung. His *Champion des*

Dames is but one long panegyric of feminine virtue, but he too frequently borrows his vocabulary from Jean de Meung himself; and he does not fear to offend these chaste ears to whom he addresses his exhortations to purity. This goes to prove what we have said regarding the prostitution of the literary language and the immodesty of the poets. As soon as one approached the *gai savoir*, one was obliged to make use of his style, which had been drawn from the bad houses. The good brother Guillaume-Alexis, monk of Lyre in Normandy, in his *Grand Blason des Fausses Amours*, composed in the middle of the fifteenth century, is no more decent in his language than the anonymous author of the book of *Matheolus*, a French poem, composed in the fourteenth century against marriage and women by a bishop of T rouenne. Thus Martin le Franc, believing that he is employing in all honor and for the profit of the ladies the poetic jargon of his time, goes on to condemn without appeal the profane poets and their academies, called *Puys d'amour*, since all their verses appeared to come from there. Here is a sample of his wrath against the *Puys d'amour*, which possessed the privilege of attracting the crowd, especially in Picardy and in Hainault:

*Pour Amours balladent et riment,
 Leur hault engin tout y employment,
 En celle estude leurs jours liment:
 L  toute vertu y desployent,
 Au service d'Amours s'employent,
 Comme s'il fut omnipotent:
 Mal font, quant ils ne se reploient
 Contre luy qui est impotent.
 Avez-vous point leu en vos livres
 Comment les folz payens rimoient,
 Autour de Bacchus, dieu des yvres,
 Et de V nus que tant amoient?
 Devant eux leurs motetz semoient,*

*Leurs rondeaux et serventois:
Or, fait-on pis qu'ils ne souloient
En Picardie et en Artois.**

It is then in the poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that we must seek for a detailed picture of the manners and the *dissolute life* of those epochs; it is also from the mode of life of certain poets that we must form an opinion as to what must have been the debauched habits of those *beaux diseurs*, the majority of whom were, as Clement Marot remarked in speaking of his valet, Frippelippe, *coureurs de bordeaux* and *beaux joueurs de quilles*. Nearly all the poets furnish certain details for our inquiry into the public manners of that time; but since we cannot here review them all, we shall limit ourselves to extracting from the words of Coquillart and Villon, those two best poets of the fifteenth century, whatever may be of interest for a history of Prostitution.

Guillaume Coquillart, although an official of Rheims, spoke in his verse the jargon of the *galloises* of his Province. He has left a number of works of joyous poetry, which were highly esteemed in their time, and which, the truth is, deserved that esteem, on account of the spirit which he put into them and on account of the turn which he gave this spirit, a spirit that was a little free, but one essentially French. Under the title of *Droits Nouveaux*, he has assembled a great number of questions, which form a sort of

*For Love they ballad and they rhyme,
And their high genius all employ,
And in such studies spend their time:
There every virtue they deploy
And Love's service they enjoy,
As though she were sublime.
Unlucky he whom they decoy
In impotent pastime.
Have you not read in your gross tomes
How foolish peasants toy
With Bacchus, god of drunken gnomes,
And Venus without alloy?
For these their motets never cloy,
Their rondeaux and their minstrelsy:
And here, I think, they more annoy
Than in Artois or Picardy.

code of libertinism. Following are a few of these questions and the responses.

The question was put to this jurisconsult of causes *grasses* as to whether a young wife ought to nourish her infant herself. He did not reply in his official capacity, but in his capacity as poet, connoisseur and libertine.

*Elle a le beau petit teton,
Cul troussé pour faire virade,
Le sain poignant, tendre, mignon:
Il n'est rien au monde plus sade (succulent).
S'elle est nourrisse, ell sera fade,
Avalée, pleine de lambeaux:
Faisandes deviennent bécasses,
Les oulz trousses deviennent peaux,
Les tetons deviennent tetasses
Nourrisses aux grandes pendasses,
Gros sains ouvers remplis de laictz,
Sont pensues comme chiches-faces
Qu'on vent trous les jours au Palays.
Tetins rebondis, rondeletz,
Durs, piquans, gettez bien au moule,
Tendus comme un arc à jaletz.
Deviennent lasches comme soule.**

*(Freely:)

She has a very pretty teat,
And a fair and well-turned rump,
A bosom tender, soft and sweet,
And nothing is more plump.
But she will be a very frump,
If she becomes a nurse;
For pheasants make but sorry cocks,
And well-turned rumps turn—worse,
And breasts that once were firm as rocks
In nurses are but flabby blocks,
Great open wells of milk,
As pendulous as two old socks:
I think you know the ilk.
Yes, breasts that once were plump and round,
Firm and of piquant mould,
Taut as a bow before rebound—
Those same breasts leave me cold.

From which it would appear that the virginal breast (cf. the "Persian breast," "bellbreast," etc.) was as popular then as now.

He was asked, when one had an affair with the *gorgiases* and the *sucrées*,

*Qui ne le font pour rien, sinon
Pour le denier. . . .**

whether this affair was *vendage*, or *louage*, or *prêt*, or *conduction*, or *permutation*, or *gage*. He replied: It is a true contract, based upon this axiom of the Roman law: *Facio ut des*.

*Afin que tu connes, je fais;
C'est l'intention toute pure:
Sans les dons, on n'ayme jamais.†*

He was asked if a *bague* or woman of pleasure who had been deceived by a *courtière* or *maquerelle*, and who had given herself, upon the word of this person, to a *putier ordinaire*, might claim damages and interest from the one who had promised her furred robes, money and *parpignoles*. Coquillart condemns the *courtière* to indemnify the poor *mignonne*, who had trusted in his fraudulent advice, and to pay her her salary (*salaire*). Moreover, the said *courtière* convicted of a swindle, was to be for some time deprived of the profits of his odious trade.

Maître Coquillart examined another case of pimping (*courtage*), which is also connected with the rubric, *De Dolo*, and which shows us that the *courtières* of the fifteenth century were no more human or less avaricious than those of our own time.

*Une qui sert de beaulx messaiges,
Une courtière qui ne vit
D'autre chose que de courtaiges,
En contrefaisant ces messaiges;
Une meschante deschirée*

*Who do it for nothing, if not
For the denier . . .

†That you may give, I will;
That is my whole intention:
For without gifts, love is nil.

*Qui a couru bourgs es villaiges
 Et est à tous abandonnée;
 Une morfondue mal parée,
 Une meschant' bague au gibier:
 Cette vielle l'a emmendée,
 Et la vous met sur le mestier,
 Et de faict l'a appointée
 De chapperon rouge, au surplus,
 De corset de soye, de baudrier,
 De robe, que voulez-vous plus?
 Tant, que, devant, pour trois festus,
 Vous, l'eussiez eue ou pour du pain;
 Maintenant, le couple d'escuz
 Ou le noble (monnaie d'or) luy pend au sain.
 Au temps de tout son premier train,
 Elle alloit partout loing et près;
 Et maintenant c'est un gros grain,
 Et ne va que aux porches secretz;
 Toute seule, à mont et à val;
 Elle alloit, devant et après,
 Toute seule, à mont et à val;
 Maintenant, c'est un cas exprès
 Qu'il la fault conduire à cheval.
 Quel' tromperie! propos final,
 C'est deception et cautelle;
 Or, l'inventeur de tout le mal
 A esté ceste macquerelle.**

*(Very freely:)

One who brings you pretty notes,
 A courtière who but lives
 By the affairs which she promotes,
 In counterfeiting those same notes:
 A wretch beyond recall,
 Who runs about the towns and dotes
 On every man and all,
 A waif with no clothes at all.
 Oh, she's a comely gallows bird
 Whom nothing can appall;
 She'll teach you tricks you've never heard
 Upon the amorous stall,

The very equitable Coquillart would have this courtière punished and pay a fine, not to the profit of the sergeant, but to that of the public, which would thus be squared in its account with the beauty in the red hat and the silk corset. Another question a good deal more delicate was put to him regarding the deceits which are practiced in love, when the wise official of Rheims was asked if an *image* (a naïve girl) might abuse the credulity of men by selling them the same object three times over:

*Quelque gros grain, faiseur du saige,
La vient ung petit manier:
Celuy-là paye l'apprentissage
Et le pucellaige premier.
Depuis, survient quelque escollier,
Gorgias, de bonne maison,
Qui se met à en essayer,
Et est le second eschanson.
Après, survient quelque mignon
Qui paye et passe les destroitiz:
Vous semble-il que ce soit raison
Vendre une seule chose à trois?"†*

With her red bonnet like a whore,
And a silk corset, on my word!
A baldrick, too—what would you more?
Her price three straws, did you implore,
Or, did you insist, a bit of bread.
Money she does adore
And when the gold crowns hang like lead
From her bosom, then all's done and said,
And she runs near and far,
And you should not be discomfited,
If she goes to doors that are not ajar;
For there is nothing her path can bar
On mountain or in the vale.
Now here's a business she must not mar,
And so, she rides a horse's tail.
In trickery she cannot fail
Or deception that is most fell;
For what is worst of woe and wail
Comes from this macquerelle.

†A certain lad who was sure he knew
And thought his judgment good
Paid the lady what was due

Coquillart is too honest to suffer such a fraud as this with respect to the quality of merchandise; he orders that the nymph, guilty of an amorous stellionate, be fustigated and beaten,

*Demy vestue et demy nue,
Pour recognoistre le délict,
Non pas au carrefour ne en rue,
Mais au quatre cornetz d'ung lict,
Les dents contremont, l'esperit
Pensant, ravy en amourette,
Et la teste au bout du chalit,
En lieu du cul d'une charette.‡*

The worthy Coquillart, who, in his official capacity, had frequently had to decide difficult cases, and who, for example, could not have been a novice in the mysteries of the *causes grasses*, employs all the authority of his legal science in his *Plaidoyer d'Entre la Simple et la Rusée*. "The most dominant quality of this piece," according to the Abbé Goujet (*Biblioth. Franc.*, Volume X, page 160), "is the obscenity. Two women are disputing about a lover; the advocates plead for and against; the rights of each party are set forth, detailed and proved, and these respective rights having been laid bare, it is seen that they are not founded certainly upon the good conduct or well regulated manners of the parties; the

And took her maidenhood.
Then came a scholar in a hood;
Gorgias, a well-bred boy,
Laid eyes upon her and thought he would
A little new wine enjoy.
And then another—ship ahoy!—
Who paid and passed the strait:
Now don't you think this maiden coy
Was charging heavy freight?

‡Half naked and half clad,
As does befit the life she's led,
Not in the street let punishment be had,
But at the four corners of a bed.
Head down, heels up, less live than dead,
There let the punishment descend;
At the bed's bottom put her head,
Instead of at a cart's tail-end.

judge interrupts the advocates, the latter resume their plea, there is an inquiry; witnesses are heard: it is a proceeding in due form."

One of the advocates, Madame Simon insists, somewhat at length, that if men, by virtue of their omnipotence, had only to abase themselves in order to satisfy their desires with women, this facility in the sensual pleasures would lead to serious inconveniences, for it would follow

*Que un meschant homme se pourroit
Rendre aux sucrées et drues,
Et ce semble qu'il ne faudroit
Qu'abatre femme emmy les rues:
Si telles manières indues
Couroyent, tout seroit aboly,
Povres filles seroyent perdues
Et le mestier trop avily:
Par quoy, il n'y auroit celuy
Qui ne gouvernast damoysselles
Et qu'il ne voulsit aujourd'huy,
Sans foncer, avoir des plus belles
Et des plus gorgaisses, s'elles
Se vouloyent abandonner. . . . **

Among the depositions of the witnesses, we must notice in particular that of an old *courtière*, who relates how the *Rusée*, who

*That a wicked fellow might turn
To ladies indiscreet
And might attack, when he did burn,
A woman in the street.
Such manners would not be meet;
Nay, all would be undone,
And perdition would come more fleet
To poor girls, every one;
While of men, there would be none
Without his flock of dames:
He could have them all beneath the sun
Without his usual games,
And even the fairest would lose their names,
If they cared to give themselves . . .

was in all likelihood a woman of dissolute life, was in the habit of leading the public women from their quarter, and how she would go, accompanied by the *tenceresses*, to stage a witches' sabbath (*faire le sabbat*) at the gate of her rival. Coquillart gives also the description of the said witness:

*Dame de bonté singulière,
Valentine irrégulière,
Religieuse de Frevaulx,
Abbesse de haulte culciere,
Prieure de longue barriere,
Du diocèse de Bourdeaulx;
Aulmousnière de vieulx naveaulx,
Gardianne de vieulx drappeaulx,
Le dos esgu comme une hotte,
Chevauchant à quatre chevaulx
Sans estrivieres ne houseaulx,
Et ridée comme une marmote.**

The witness, in describing the assemblage of women, designates them for the most part by their names and soubriquets, which greatly resemble those which we have extracted from the tax records of 1292, which goes to attest the persistence of the customs of Prostitution. As to this curious nomenclature, there might be found today, in the lowest ranks of lost women, many unfortunates who would answer the roll-call.

*Most gracious she, I do opine,
An irregular valentine,
A religious of Frevaux,
Abbess of culture fine,
Prioress of long line,
Of the diocese of Bordeaux;
One of those almoners, I know,
Who sail with all the winds that blow,
With her back of funnel-shape;
Of coach and four her show,
But her legs are bare below,
And she's wrinkled like an ape.

*C'est assavoir Margot la Gente,
 Jacqueline de Carpentras,
 Olive de Gaste-Fatras,
 Hugueline de Cote-Crotée,
 Marion de Traîne-Poetras,
 Et Julienne l'Esgarée,
 Cristine la Decoulourée,
 Égyptienne la Pompeuse,
 Augustine la Mauparée,
 Bertheline la Rioteuse,
 Sansonnette Lourd-Grimarrée,
 Henriette la Marmiteuse,
 Guillemette Porte-Cuirasse,
 Ragonde Michelin-Becasse,
 Regnaudine la Rondelette,
 Laurence la Grand-Chiche-Face,
 Demeurant à la Pourcelette,
 Jacquette la Blanche-Fleurette,
 Tiennon la Cousine-Yolant,
 Edeline Pisse-Collette,
 Maistresse de la Truye-Volant,
 Freminette de Mal-Tallent,
 Geffine Petit-Fretillon,
 Rauqueline de l'Esguillon,
 Josseline de Becquillon,
 Et dame Biatrix, demourant
 En la rue du Carrillon,
 A l'ymage du Cormorant.*

These various nicknames, descriptive of the defects and qualities of the women, their physiognomy or their toilet, might have furnished material for a very curious commentary which the learned Leduchat would not have left unwritten; thus, Olive de Gaste-Fatras appears to us to have been baptized with this name for the reason that she ruined the men who approached her. *Fatras* was the name given then to a bundle of keys and in the

figurative style of the good *raillards*, keys and *fatras* were scattered everywhere. Marion de Traîne-Poetras appears to owe this vile nickname to the filthiness of her chemise, like that which a comic writer of the school of Bruscombille pictures to us as "*poitrassée par devant et dorée par derrière*." For the rest, we may believe that Coquillart did not go to seek his subjects at Paris, but that he embodied in his naïvely smutty verses all that he had seen with his own eyes in the good city of Rheims.

He must have been an excellent official, and Jean Juvénal des Ursins, Archbishop of Rheims, does not hesitate to act as his testamentary executor, in 1472; he was, certainly a very witty and very gay poet, but of manners very relaxed. There are to be found in his poems many charming liberties which Lafontaine has not disdained to imitate. He was, undoubtedly, not very fastidious with regard to the morality of the company he kept. His verses initiate us into his mode of life, and his epitaph composed by Clément Marot informs us that he died as he had lived.

*La morre est jeu pire qu'aux quilles,
Ne qu' aux eschecs ne qu'an quillart:
A ce meschant jeu, Coquillart
Perdit la vie et ses coquilles.**

This epitaph has surely been misunderstood by the biographers who have cited it, and who would have it that Coquillart, having lost a considerable sum at the game of *morre*, died of chagrin. Clément Marot, if not the Abée Goujet, would have made allusion to the three *coquilles d'or* which the old Coquillart carried. It is our opinion that there is to be seen in this epitaph a succession of word plays, which the commentators of Marot have not suspected. The *morre* is undoubtedly a game which goes back to the highest antiquity, where it is known as *micatio digittum* and consists in raising as many fingers as the adversary

*Worse than ninepins or than chess
Is the game of *la morre*, by far;
And at this sad game, Coquillart
Lost life and *coquilles*, my guess.

raises with a marvelous vivacity. We may get without difficulty the indecent allusion which the poet makes by a mere comparison of *la morre* to *l'amour*, when we reflect upon the analogy between the two games. From this it results that Coquillart had lost *la vie et ses coquilles* (another obscene allusion in playing at *l'amour*. By *coquille* was figuratively implied the organ of the woman (*ovi putamen*), and by *coquilles* the witnesses of the masculine sex (*testiculi*). It was said proverbially of a woman: *la coquille lui démange*; and of a man; *les coquilles lui sonnent*. From these philological explanations, it is clear enough that Coquillart, from haunting the company of ladies, had contracted there a shameful malady, which made such ravages upon his person that his sexual parts were gangrene and finally fell under the bistoury of the surgeon. Coquillart, as a matter of fact, died about 1500, at the period when the plague of Naples was claiming so many victims in France. This was not a very edifying death for an official, but quite a natural one for a poet who possessed no other muses than the *mignonnes* of the clapiers.

CHAPTER XXIII

IT IS to the works of Francois Villon that we must go to learn what sort of life it was which was led by the *mauvais garçons* and the daughters of joy of the fifteenth century. Villon, before entering the prison of the Châtelet, and being sentenced to perish on the scaffold, had passed his youth in houses of debauchery, frequenting only such shameful company as he met there. It was, as he himself confesses, gambling, *repues franches* and women which led him to crime and which led him two or three times to be condemned with his accomplices. He was born of a family respectable but poor by the name of *Corbueil*; but he was nicknamed *Villon*, that is to say, thief or pickpocket, since his high deeds (*hauts faits*) as *pince* and *croc* had taught him to be known as a clever rascal among the ribalds of the good city of Paris. He took the title of "scholar" (*écolier*) and it may be judged, from his poems, that he had studied in the great schools of the rue du Fouare, before receiving his "master of arts" (*maître-ès-arts*) in those schools that taught the argot of Prostitution.

He began by thefts of little importance, such as gave him only the prospect of a good meal with his friends and mistresses; he took upon himself the task of procuring for them, without untying his purse strings, bread, meat and above all, wine, and he invented a number of clever tricks by means of which he was able to rob the shops of merchants. His first arraignment dates from the year 1456. He was then locked up in the prison of the Petit-Châtelet, and during this captivity he composed his Little Testament (*Petit Testament*), in which he takes pleasure in recalling some souvenirs of his debauched and indecent life. He accuses of his own faults a woman whom he loves, but whom he does not name; she was, very likely, a public woman with whom he

had cohabitated and who, one winter night, had put him out of the door insisting that he never return. Villon, finding himself without asylum had had recourse to theft in order to avoid dying of hunger, and he had taken to wandering in the streets of Paris. And yet, as he thinks with pleasure of the good times he had passed with this *villotièr*, he leaves to her, as he tells us, his heart, "cold and dead" (*mort et transi*),

*Qui si durement m'a chassé,
Que j'en suis de joye interdit
Et de tout plaisir dechassé.**

A passage of the *Little Testament* shows us that the libertines at the University of Paris were in the habit of going to feast with their meschines, either in the cabaret of the *Abreuvoir Popin*, which was situated on the banks of the river opposite the rue Thibautodé at the place where the quai de la Mégisserie has since been constructed, or at the trou (pot house) of the *Pomme du Pin*, the exact situation of which we do not know, although this cabaret was still famous in the seventeenth century.

Francois Villon was but twenty-six years old when he sallied forth from the Petit Châtelet to return to his villainous haunts. The bad society which he encountered was not slow in nauseating him, and although he continued to live at the expense of dissolute women, who afforded him the privileges of a lover, he was not content with the silver which was to be obtained by the unworthy trade of these companions of his. And so he went to commit his *villonneries* by main force on the high road, in concert with a few depraved men, who afterwards assisted him in dissipating the spoils in gambling and at table. In 1461, after an act of violence, which appears to have had for scene the village of Rouel, in the environs of Paris, he was arrested anew at Melun, along with five of his accomplices, judged by the tribunal of the Châte-

*Who so cruelly has chased me away,
I am from all joy interdict,
And find no pleasure in my way.

let, and condemned to be hanged on the gallows of Montfaucon. He took the thing gaily enough, for he himself composed his epitaph:

*Je suis François (dont ce ne poise)
Né de Paris auprès Pontoise.
Or d'une corde d'une toise,
Scaura mon col que mon cal poise.†*

Nevertheless, in accordance with the advice of his counsel, he did not rely upon the judgment of the provost of Paris, but appealed the sentence to Parliament. It was during the delays attendant upon this appeal that he put into rhyme (*en rimes*) his Great Testament (*Grand Testament*) in which he introduces, with much malice and verve, all the dice-players and the coureurs of the clapiers, all the shameful personnel of contemporary Prostitution. This *Great Testament*, which does not testify greatly to the repentance of its author, is, for that reason, all the more a faithful echo of the bad houses of Paris, and a scandalous record of the lives of poets, scholars, and vagabonds.

Villon commences by introducing in his *Testament* the beautiful Heaulmière, who in her youth had had a gilded girdle and much ill renown but who, upon becoming older, had found no better trade than that of mistress of a house filled with daughters of joy. The beautiful Heaulmière (she was, perhaps, a trades woman who sold or made *heaulmes*, or casques in the rue de la Heaulmière) had been very beautiful, and, on this account, much courted by clerics, merchants and churchmen, who did not haggle over her good graces; but at the period when her favors were paid for so dearly, she loved a *garçon rusé*, who gave her nothing but ill treatment, and who robbed her of all she gained by the pain of her body. From which it may be seen, the manners of the

†I am François (who here sways).
At Paris near Pontoise I began my days;
And now a fathom of good rope slays
My neck which my good rump down weighs.

despicable parasites of Prostitution had not changed for four centuries. Listen to the complaints of the beautiful Heaulmière:

*Or, ne me faisoit que rudesse
Et, par m'ame! je l'amoys bien!
Et à qui que fisse finesse,
Il ne m'aymoit que pour le myen.*

*Jà ne me sceut tant detrayner,
Fouller aux piedz, que ne l'aymasse,
Et m'eut-il faict les rains trayner,
S'il me disoit que le baisasse
Et que tous mes maux oubliasse,
Le glouton, de mal entaché,
M'embrassoit! J'en suy bien plus grasse!
Que m'en reste-t-il? Honte-et péché!**

The beautiful Heaulmière, lamenting thus before a fire of hemp-stalks, might have been seen crouched upon her ankles in the company of a number of other old women who listened to her with a mocking smile. The garçon rusé, for whom this foolish old prostitute sighed, had been dead, she told them, for thirty years. And yet, the commenators of our poets have been tempted to believe that it was none other than Francois Villon himself whom she regretted in this manner, for the reason that he had beaten and robbed her so much. She draws a gracious portrait of the woman she had once been, in sad opposition to a picture of what she now is. In the one she is a prostitute; in

*He never gave me aught but blows,
And, by my soul! I loved him well!
But that's the way it always goes:
He only loved what I had to sell.

I could have fawned at his very feet,
Who loved him well, though he loved not me;
And oh, but his words were, oh, how sweet!
What times he spoke caressingly.
And I forgot all my woes, when he,
The evil glutton, would begin;
His kisses! Ah, the memory!
And now what have I? Shame and sin!

the other she is a courtière. We propose to place side by side these two portraits which are so different from each other.

*Qu'est devenu ce front poly,
Ces cheveulx blonds, sourcilz vouttiz (arqués),
Grand entre'oeil, le regard joly
Dont prenoye les plus subtilz;
Ce beau nez, ne grand ne petiz,
Ces petites jointes oreilles,
Menton fourchu, cler vistraictis (clair visage bien fait),
Et ces belles levres vermeilles?*

*Ces gentes espaulles menues,
Ces bras longs et ces mains traictisses (bien faites),
Petiz tetins, hanches charnues,
Eslevées, propres, faictisses
A tenir amoureuses lysses,
Ces larges reins, ce sadinet
Assis sur grosses fermes cuysses
Dedans son joly jardin?*

*Le front ridé, les cheveulx gris,
Les sourcilz cheuz, les yeux estainctz,
Qui faisoient regars et ris
Dont maintz marchans furent attainctz,
Nez courbé, de beaulté loingtains,
Oreilles pendens et moussues,
Le vis (visage) pally, mort, et destaincts,
Menton foncé, levres peaussues.*

*C'est d'humaine beauté l'yssues,
Les bras courts et les mains contraictes,
Les espaulles toutes bossues,
Mammelles, quoy? toutes retraictes;
Telles les hanches que les tettes
Du sadinet . . . *Fy!* Quaint des cuysses,*

*Cuisses ne sont plus, mais cuissettes
Grivelées comme saulcisses.**

The beautiful Heaulmière is then no longer good for anything, except to give a lesson (*bailler une leçon*) to the daughters of joy, and following is the doctrine which she presents to them in a ballade, and here we shall take occasion to remark that the *light* women belonged, for the most part, to trade corporations, as we have already indicated.

*What has become of that smooth forehead,
Of those blonde locks and that arched brow,
That pretty gaze, where has it fled,
Where are those subtle beauties now?
That handsome nose, just right I vow,
That dimpled chin and little ears, too,
That comely face light did endow
And those lips of vermilion hue?

Those gentle shoulders that were so slim,
Those long arms, and that shapely hand,
Little breasts and haunches trim:
Only a lover will understand
The price such beauties could command;
Those large loins and their treasure-trove,
Seated above a firm lowland
Within a pretty garden-cove.

Her forehead is wrinkled, her locks are gray,
Her brows are fallen, her eyes are dim,
For many merchants have had their way,
And many lovers have had their whim;
Her nose is hooked and no longer prim,
Her ears are pendulous and sleek,
Her face is as pale as death's own brim,
Her lips are skinny, her chin a beak.

This is all human beauty's end,
These shrunken arms, these withered claws,
Shoulders humped and backs that bend,
Breasts? They follow the same laws,
Haunches now are full of flaws,
And thighs that once were firmly bound
Are thighs no more but rather straws,
Like sausages all speckled round.

Cf. some of Aretino's old procuresses (the theme is a favorite one with him). Cf. especially this description with the one of the old witch-nun, the story entitled "Convent Sports" in my translation (*I Ragionamenti*, First Part, First Day, "The Life of Nuns.").

*Or, y pensez, belle gantière,
 Qui m'escoillère souliez estre,
 Et vous, Blanche la savatière,
 Or, est-il temps de vous cognoistre!
 Prenez à dextre et à senestre,
 N'espargnez homme, je vous prie,
 Car vieilles n'ont ne cours ny estre,
 Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.*

*Et vous, la gente saulcissiere,
 Qui de danser estes, adextre,
 Guillemette la tapissière,
 Ne mesprenez vers vostre maistre:
 Tous vous fauldra clore fenestre,
 Quand deviendrez vieille flestrie,
 Plus ne servirez qu'ung viel prebstre,
 Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.*

*Jehanneton la chaperonniere,
 Gardez qu'ennuy ne vous empestre;
 Katherine l'esperonniere,
 N'envoyez plus les hommes paistre,
 Car, qui belle n'est, ne perpetre
 Leur male grace, mais leur rie:
 Laidde vieillesse amour ne impetre
 Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.*

*Filles, veuillez vous entremettre
 D'escouter pourquoy pleure et crie?
 Pour ce que je ne me puy mettre
 Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie.**

*Pretty glove maker, think well, I pray,
 If you would go to school to me;
 Blanche, you, who cobble shoes by day,
 It is high time the light to see!
 Take right and left most brazenly;
 Spare no man ever, I implore,
 For we old ones have no sympathy
 For any sentimental whore.

This ballade shows us that Prostitution in the fifteenth century was in the habit of recruiting its forces from among the glove makers (*gantières*), the shoemakers (*savatières*), the sausage makers (*saucissières*), the tapestry makers (*tapissières*), the hood makers (*chaperonnières*), and the spur makers (*éperonnières*). We shall discover still another detail which deserves to be observed, and that is that the dissolute women were in the habit of posting themselves at their windows to attract passers-by, a practice which is still to be found in Holland, at La Hague and at Amsterdam, where one may see in the suspect streets, at the windows of the ground floor, behind transparent curtains, certain women who show themselves half naked or voluptuously clad.

Francois Villon, who had in prospect the forked gallows of Montfaucon, and who was perhaps half reformed in the hope of escaping execution, counsels his readers to learn the deceitfulness (*barat*) of public women who have an eye only for the purse and the honor of their neighbor; for, he says,

And gentle sausage maker, you
 Who know how to dance so very well,
 And Guillemette, the rug maker, too,
 Best learn how best your wares to sell:
 There's one thing that I have to tell
 When old age comes upon a whore,
 None but a presbyter old and fell
 Will give her good bright money more.

Jehanneton, I like your hood,
 But I like not your slothfulness,
 And, Katherine, your spurs are good,
 But do not keep men in duress,
 For she who is fair to their caress
 Has their good grace and something more:
 She's an old hag I must confess,
 Who gets no money as a whore.

Daughters, would you know why I shake,
 And why my tears flow evermore?
 It is because I cannot make
 Good money as a whore.

*Car ce sont femmes diffamées!
S'elles n'ayment que pour argent,
On ne les ayme que pour l'heure:
Rondement ayment toute gent,
Et rient, lorsque bourse pleure.**

The poet repents not having, rather, frequented the company of good women, who would have kept him from vice in place of causing him to fall into it, but he cannot refrain from reviewing with imaginative complacency, the exploits of his foolish youth; they were 'infamous women' (*femmes diffamées*), that is understood, but they were so beautiful, so joyous, so well built for love! He remembers even the lessons he received from two of them, who had taught him to "speak a little *"poictevin"*, (*parler un peu le poictevin*). We believe that he implies by this figurative expression, the exact sense of which it would be difficult to render, the art of the pimp (*souteneur de filles*); he refers to his two instructresses by a metaphor which is more intelligible, or which at least has been explained:

*Filles sont très-belles et gentes
Demeurantes à Saint-Genou,
Près Saint-Julian des Voventes,
Marches de Bretagne ou Poictou,
Mais je ne dy proprement où.
Or, y pensez trestous les jours,
Car je ne suis mie (pas) si fou:
Je pense celer mes amours.†*

*For they are women of ill fame!
And if they love one but for gold,
'Tis but for a round hour one keeps
Their love, when all the tale is told,
Smiling the while his wallet weeps.

†The girls are pretty as you could want
Who live for love at Saint-Genou,
Near Saint-Julian des Voventes,
Borders of Brittany or Poictou,
Just where, I cannot tell to you.
But be assured in all my tours,
I am a wise man—wily, too,
And turn to profit my amours.

In order to understand this metaphorical language, it is sufficient to compare with this passage one from *Gargantua* of Rabelais (Book I, chapter 6), in which there is reference to an *orde vieille*, who practiced the trade of midwife: "She had come," says Maître François, "from Brisepaille near Saint-Genou." The learned Leduchat established a point, in his commentary, that this was the designation given, in Languedoc and in Dauphiné to a debauched old woman; "that signifies," he says, "that she for a long time has broken with her knees the straw of her truckle-bed."

Villon has forgotten his shame; he gives free reign to his imagination, and he formulates in these terms the morality of the good liver of his time:

*Il n'est tresor que de vivre à son aise.**

He indulges in an ample eulogy of the women of Paris, "who have so sharp a beak" (*qui ont le bec si affilé*), and he praises their language above those of all Christendom:

Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.†

He recognizes also other merits in the Parisiennes, and he cites a few of them, who, however, did not make a fortune at debauchery:

*Temoing Jacqueline et Perrette
Et Ysabeau qui dit: Enné!‡*

Clément Marot, in a note to his edition of Villon, assures us that the word *enné* was a woman's oath. Villon takes pity on the distress (*disette*) of these three poor girls whom he had not been able to enrich, and who he wishes might have the crowns

*There is no treasure but to live at ease.

†"There is no good gab save at Paris," is Nicolson's translation of this line, which, as he remarks, has never been rendered satisfactorily, all translators, including Swinburne, having fallen down over it.

‡Witness Jacqueline and Perrette
And Ysabeau who says: *Enné!*

which fall from the tables of the Celestins and the Chartreux; but all his preferences are for "*la grosse Margot*";

*Tres doulce face et pourtraicture,
Allez devote créature:
Je l'aime de propre nature,
Et elle moy, la doulce sade (mignonne)!**

It is to her that he addresses a ballade of which she is the heroine and he the hero. This ballade affords us a picturesque and cynical view of the ménage which was kept by the girls and their lovers:

*Si je ayme et sers la belle de bon haict (de bon coeur),
M'en devez-vous tenir à vil ne sot?
Elle à en soy des biens à fin souhaict!
Pour son amour, ceings bouclier et passot (dague).
Quant viennent gens, je vous happe le pot:
Au vin m'en voys, sans demener grand bruyt.
Je leur tends (présente) eau, frommage, pain et fruit;
Sil's payent bien, je leur dy que bien stat (tout est bien):
Retournez cy, quand vous serez en ruyt (rut),
En ce bourdel où tenons nostre estat.*

1

*Mais, tost apres, il y a grand deshait (chagrin),
Quant sans argent s'en vient coucher Margot;
Veoir ne la puis, mon cueur à mort la hait;
Sa robe prends, chapperon et surcot,
Si luy prometz qu'ils tiendront pour l'escot.
Par les costés si se prend, l'Antechrist
Crie, et jure par la mort Jesuchrist,
Que non fera . . . Lors, j'empongne ung esclat,*

*She of the sweet and pretty face,
Face that I love so to be near,
I love her for her native grace,
And she loves me, the pretty dear!

*Desus le nez luy en fais un escript,
En ce bourdel où tenons nostre estat.*

*Puis paix se faict, et me lasche un gros pet,
Plus enflée qu'um venimeux scarbot,
Riant m'assiet le poing sur le sommet;
Gogo me dit, et me fiert le jambot.
Tous deux yvres dormons comme un sabot,
Et au resveil, quant le ventre luy bruyt,
Monte sur moy, quel' ne gaste son fruict,
Soubz elle geins, plus qu'um aiz me fait plat:
De paillader tout elle me destruit,
En ce bourdel où tenons nostre estat.*

*Vente, gresle, gelle, j'ay mon pain cuict:
Je suis paillard, la paillarde me duit:
L'ung vault l'autre, c'est à mau-chat mau-rat;
Ordure avons et ordure nous suyt,
Nous deffuyons honneurs, et il nous fuyt,
En ce bourdel où tenons nostre estat.**

It is impossible to paint under colors more hideous this horrible concubinage, in which the man lived by the Prostitution of the woman, a Prostitution which he favored and protected.

*If I do love this beauty in my heart,
Should you then hold me, villain or a fool?
Oh, she can teach you all the lover's art!
Then for her love gird on the warrior's tool.
If one comes in, I'll entertain the fool
And drink my wine without great bruit.
I'll give him water, cheese and bread and fruit:
If he pays well, I'll tell him at the gate,
He may return, when passion drives him to't,
To this bourdel wherein we keep our state.

But afterward there is a great chagrin
When Margot, penniless, comes into bed;
'Tis then my heart does hate her like all sin;
Take her robe, her cloak, the very hood on her head
And pawn them, for a poor pimp must be fed.

Villon takes us with him into those infected holes where the dirtiest debauchery gave asylum to drunkenness. The famous Maccette of Regnier is not better *pourtraicte* than the Margot of Villon.

Villon had been the well-beloved (*the franc gontier*) of Margot, whom he was in the habit of beating when silver did not come onto the house; but in reading his *Great Testament*, we discover at every step that Margot had many rivals of the same sort. Thus the poet, when he has been put into a good humor, speaks of Marion l'Ydolle and of the grand Jehanne de Bretagne, who kept "public school" (*publique école*),

Où l'escolier le maistre enseigne."†

But since it is a question of making honorable amends, he addresses himself lamentably to these *enfants perdus*, who are to be found, he tells us, in the house of Marion l'Ydolle, he urges them to refrain from imitating him. A ballade "of good doctrine" which he offers to "those of evil life" makes us still better acquainted with these inmates of the taverns and the bordels:

And then she swears egad, a mighty oath,
By the Antichrist, the death of Christ, and both,
I shall not do it . . . Then, to close debate,
A blow on the nose and she's no longer loath,
In this bordel wherein we keep our state.

And then peace comes, it's settled with a poop,
A venomous one, that wins from her a smile;
And then you ought to see my darling stoop
And lay her hand upon my head the while,
As many an amorous word and look beguile
Us like two drunken owls into a doze;
Then, she mounts me, though heaven surely knows
I am not used to such a luckless weight,
But that is where my health flees, honor goes
In this bordel wherein we keep our state.

Wind, hail or frost, I know I've baked my bread;
I am a villain, villain when all's said:
One's good as the other; it's an even fate.
Ordure we are and ordure we must tread;
We flee from honour, and now honour's fled,
In this bordel wherein we keep our state.

†Where the scholar teaches the master.

*Car, or' soyes porteur de bulles,
 Pipeur ou hazardeur de dez,
 Tailleur de faulx coings, tu te brules
 Comme ceux qui sont eschaudez (boulus);
 Trahistres (traîtres) pervers, de foy vuydez,
 Soyes larrons, ravis ou pillés:
 Où en va l'acquest que cuydez?
 Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.*

*Rime, raille, cymballe, luttés,
 Hante tous autres eshontez,
 Farce, broille, joue des flustes,
 Fainctes, jeux et moralitez,
 Faictz en villes et citez;
 Gaigne au berlan, au glic (jeu de cartes), aux quilles;
 Où s'en va tout? Or, escoutez,
 Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.*

*De telz ordures te reculles,
 Laboure, fauche champs et prez,
 Sers et pense chevaux et mulles,
 S'aucunement tu n'es lettrez;**

*If you are a bearer of lying notes, or turn
 A crafty but a dangerous trick at dice,
 Or deal in false coins, beware, my lad, you'll burn
 Like those who are boiled alive for their great vice:
 Traitors perverse and void of all good faith,
 Robbers and knaves you are, and thievish churls;
 While the booty that you get is but a wraith:
 It all goes to the taverns and the girls.

Then rhyme and brawl to cymbal or the lute,
 And haunt the company of other fools;
 Yes, go on, act the farce and play the flute,
 And mimic in the moral plays of schools,
 In towns and cities where you find your tools;
 Then gain your share at cards or lucky hurls
 At nine-pins. Where goes it? You know the rules:
 It all goes to the taverns and the girls.

But if you my friend, from filth like this recoil,
 Then labor in the fields and meadows fair,
 With mules and horses plowing up the soil;
 And if for books and letters you do not care,

*Assez auras, si prens en grez;
 Mais, si chanvre broyes ou tilles,
 Ne metz ton labeur qu'as ouvrez,
 Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.*

*Chausses, pourpoinctz et bourreletz,
 Robes, et toutes vos drapilles,
 Ains que cessez, vous porterez
 Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.**

This moral ballade shows us that the poets, the comedians, the jugglers, the musicians and the gamblers formed the fine flower of Prostitution. Villon was distinguished among them all by reason of his disorderly life and his amours, however poor he may have been, for he drew with both hands from the purses of his mistresses' customers. He robs, in passing, an avaricious banker, Maître Jacques James, who never spent money except for the *truies*, and who purchased his pleasures in the best possible market:

*Pour qui amasse-t-il? pour les siens;
 Il ne plainct, fors que ses morceaux:
 Ce qui fut aux truyes, je tiens
 Qu'il doit de droit estre aux pourceaulx.†*

*You still will have enough in the open air;
 But whether you beat hemp with other churls
 Or labor in the furrow—what matter, where?
 It all goes to the taverns and the girls.

Doublets and hose and pads for your behind,
 Cannot withstand a head of pretty curls;
 Before they're used—you are so very kind—
 They all go to the taverns and the girls.

†For whom does he hoarde up all that gold?
 He thinks of naught but me and mine;
 Now that which is fit for sows, I hold,
 Ought to be thrown to the swine.

Finally, the unfortunate Villon, after having in a bantering manner made his last bequests, commends his soul to the prayers of all those who ought to be interested in his fate:

*A fillettes, monstrans testins
Pour avoir plus largement hostes;
A ribleurs, meneurs de hutins;
A bateleurs, traynans marmottes;
A folz et folles, sotz et sottes,
Qui s'en vont sifflant cinq et six;
A marmousetz et mariottes,
Je crie â toutes gens merciz!**

But the appeal which had retarded the execution of Francois Villon met with a more favorable result than the condemned man had hoped for; for he found himself included in a general amnesty which Louis XI accorded to the prisoners upon the occasion of his joyous accession. The poet thus escaped the rope and returned gaily "to the taverns and the girls" (*aux tavernes et aux filles*). He had seen from too close up what might be the consequences of a criminal prosecution to be willing to expose himself again; but he was too vicious and too hardened to maintain an honorable conduct; he no longer robbed upon the highway, however, and he avoided any new encounters with justice.

It was at this epoch, undoubtedly, that he took part in those joyous *repues franches*, which were celebrated in rhyme by one of his *subjêts*, and which were the direct and lineal descendants of the ancient *villonnèries*. He was always concerned with getting a good meal at the expense of someone else; he was also eager to procure meat, bread and wine by means of some good trick. The poem on the *Repues franches*, which has been some-

*To young girls showing pretty teats,
To get them a few lovers more,
To rowdies who do divers feats,
To monkey-trainers with their lore,
To idiot-fools of either sex
Who with their whistling madden me,
To widows, maids and all who vex,
I cry you all mercy!

times attributed to Villon himself, convokes the army and the rear guard of Prostitution:

*Venez aussi, toutes presteresses,
Qui savez pieca les adresses
Des prestres d'amours hault et bas:
Gardez que vous n'y faillez pas!
Venez, gorriers et gorrières,
Qui faictes si bien les manieres,
Que c'est une chose terrible,
Pour bien faire tout le possible!
Toutes manieres de farseurs,
Anciens et jeunes mocquers,
Venez tous, vrays maquereaulx
De tous estatz vieulx et nouveaulx!
Venez-y toutes, maquerelles,
Qui par vos subtilles querelles
Avez tousjours en voz maisons,
Pour avoir, en toutes saisons,
Tant jours ouvriers que dimanches,
Souvent les bonnes repues franchises.**

*Then come, each charming-fair priestess,
So skilled in amorous address
With priests of love, both low and high,
See that you do not wander by!
And come, you merry lads and lasses,
Who win your stakes at many passes,
Here is something to enhance
The life you lead of fearful chance!
And all manner of farceurs, too,
Ancient and young, the motley crew,
Come all true pimps, the brave and bold
Of all estates both new and old!
And come, each old procuress-louse,
Who always have within the house
Some very good and subtle reason
For a feast in every season:
On Sundays, working days, at need,
You are always good for a free feed.

John Payne in the *Introduction* to his Villon Society translation (1892), refers to this poem as "the curious collection of anecdotes in verse known as 'Les Repues Franches' or 'Free Feeds' (of which he was the hero, *not* the author, and in which one phase of his many-sided character and career is recorded.)' "

We may judge from the style of this poem alone that it is later than Villon. As to the adventures which are related in it, there is one which belongs evidently to the celebrated scholar of Paris. A number of "companions" by trade went one evening in a fine party to *faire la noce* in the country near the gallows of Mont-faucon; they were well provided with victuals; they had a jug of wine, bread and a pastry "of subtle fashion (*de facon subtile*), containing six capons and "*de la chair*;" they brought, "in conclusion,"

*Avec eux chascun une fille.**

Two scholars, of whom one must have been Villon himself, had conceived the idea of eating the soup of some companions whom they had found seated at table in a *loge* or cabin,

*Esperant de faire grand'chiere
Et tastant devant et derrière
Les povres filles hault et bas.†*

The two scholars had dressed themselves as devils; they had put on horrible masks and carried clubs with which they assailed the gallants, with a war cry:

*. . . À mort à mort à mort!
Prenez a ces chesnes de fer
Ribaulx, putains, par desconfort,
Et les amenez en enfer!‡*

The fellows and the girls were frightened and fled, thinking they were damned, and leaving behind them their supper, which

*With them each a girl.

†Hoping to make great cheer
In tasting, front and rear,
The poor girls high and low.

‡ . . . To death! To death! To death!
Take them with iron chains fell,
Ribalds and whores, all out of breath,
And lead them away to hell!

they had just begun; the two devils, taking their places at the table, ate and drank with a high courage, without the meal costing them a single denier.

This adventure is evidently the source of a similar devil story which Rabelais related on the subject of Villon in his troupe of scholars, disguised as devils, and playing in the farces, the mysteries and the moralities. The nomadic actors who took part in these dramatic compositions, were all of them arrant libertines, although they frequently performed moral and religious pieces; but they preferred to play the farces and the *soties*, which did not demand so great an outlay of scenery and costumes as did the mysteries. This species of popular comedy was, moreover, better suited to their manners and to their character. They went thus from city to city, "*farçant et broillant*," to the applause of their gross-minded spectators, who cared only to laugh, and who marvelously enjoyed the gross salt and spice of what was known as Gallic (*gallois*) wit. These comedians, these perambulating poets, lived in a state of debauchery with debauched women who did not perform with them upon the stage, however, for they themselves took the roles of women by making up the face or by covering it with a mask. We do not see female comedians figuring in a theatrical performance in France before the end of the sixteenth century. The good public, which was not scandalized in listening to the most obscene pleasantries, would not have endured those pleasantries in the mouth of a woman. It is certain, always, that the comic troupes composed of poets, scholars, procurators' clerks and young adventurers of every sort, had manners so relaxed that the civil and judicial authorities frequently had to order them to disperse and would restrain them from running about the country giving performances which were never unaccompanied by scandal. The companies of la Basoche, la Mère-Sotte, of the Prince des Sots, of the Empire d'Orléans, of the Enfants Sans-souci, etc., were undoubtedly associations of debauchees, rather than theatrical troupes. The income from the performances (*jeux*) served, according to the expression of the time, to "furnish" (*garnir*) the bed and board of gamblers

(*joueurs*). At the end of the fifteenth century, the profane poets were in the habit of going to serve their apprenticeship in these joyous associations, where each one forgot his true name and assumed a soubriquet and a descriptive epithet (*devise*). Jean Bouchet was called the *Traverseur des Voyes Périlleuses* (one who crosses perilous paths); François Habert was called the *Banny de Liesse* (the merry outlaw); Pierre Gringoire was called *Mèresotte* (foolish mother), etc. Clément Marot, who was author of and actor in the farces in which the troupe of Enfants Sans-souci played, took it upon himself to defend in verse his comrades in pleasure, against the envious ones who had accused them of leading a scandalous life, and who had provoked their expulsion from Paris about the year 1512.

*Qui sont ceux-là, qui ont si grand' envie
Dedans leur cueur, et triste marrisson (chagrin)
Dont, ce pendant que nous sommes en vie,
De maistre Ennuy n'escoutons la leçon?
Ils ont grand tort, veu qu'en bonne façon
Nous consommons nostre fleurissant aage.
Sauter, danser, chanter à l'avantage,
Faux envieux, est-ce chose qui blesse?
Nenny, pour vray, mais toute gentillesse
Et gay vouloir qui nous tient en ses lacqs:
Ne blasmez point doncques nostre jeunesse,
Car noble coeur ne cherche que soulas (soulagement).**

*Pray, who are those who are with envy eaten,
And are chagrined in heart, most sorrowfully,
Because in life our path is not well beaten,
And we have not learned the lesson of Ennui?
Oh, they are wrong; we do but joyfully
Here pluck the flower of our verdant youth,
In song and dance and merry gambols, sooth,
Is it not envy that pricks them to pain?
'Tis but from gentleness and gay good will we're fain
To wander in these very pleasant ways:
Then do not blame our years, but know the truth:
A noble heart seeks solace for its days.

Clément Marot had too much interest in concealing the truth not to cover with a mantle of respectability the debauchery of the Enfants Sans-souci. If we are to believe him, his companions had nothing but the peccadilloes of youth with which to reproach themselves:

*Bon cueur, bon corps, bonne phyzionomie;
Boire matin, fuir noise et tancon (querelle);
Dessus le soir, pour l'amour de s'amie,
Devant son huis la petite chanson;
Trencher du brave et du mauvais garson,
Aller de nuict sans faire aucun outrage,
Se retirer, voilà le tripotage;
Le lendemain, recommencer la presse:
Conclusion, nous demandons liesse,
De la tenir jamais ne fusmes las:
Et maintenons que cela est noblesse,
Car noble coeur ne cherche que soulas.†*

This *soulas*, of which Clément Marot gives us so edifying a eulogy, had a direct connection with Prostitution, and the works of this poet, whom Calvin was still able to convert at the time of the Reformation, are filled with licentious reminiscences of what he calls his "verdant youth" (*verde jeunesse*.)

Such was, moreover, the ordinary life of scholars who followed the courts until they reached the age of maturity, and who found only too many occasions for debauchery at Paris and in the other university cities. Thus, Clément Marot was but nineteen years

†Good body, heart and physiognomy;
To drink at dawn, flee noise and brawling wrong;
And then, when evening brings its witchery,
Before my lady's door a bit of song;
A lad who o'er the trencher lingers long
And then goes home, not wakening the town,
That is the way with lads of true renown;
And on the morrow, back to the battle's press,
For all we ask of life is joyfulness,
And may we never wander from her ways;
For know, my friend, wherein lies nobleness:
A noble heart seeks solace for its days.

old when we find him already pronouncing a hyperbolic judgment upon the women of the capital (*Dialogue de Deux Amoureux*):

*Quand les petites villotières
Trouvent quelque hardy amant
Qui vueille mettre un dyamant
Devant leurs yeux rians et vers (chatoyants),
Coac! elles tombent à l'envers.**

A contemporary of Marot, Pierre Faifeu, who was a scholar of Angers, and whose *Légende* in rhymed verse Charles Bordiné brought together about 1531, won for himself a renown almost equal to that of Villon by his *gestes et dits joyeux*. But his biographer, being a priest, had to pass over in silence the most indecent trips and the most brazen remarks of this scholar of Angers, whom he opposed to the celebrated scholar of Paris. We do not find, therefore, in this naïve *légende*, as we might expect, a picture of the Prostitution of the écoliers; but it is permissible to suppose, from two or three passages, that Pierre Faifeu kept the same company as Francois Villon, and devoted "to the taverns and to the girls" all the silver he could filch from his neighbor.

This is how he took vengeance one day on a devout old lady named Macée, whom he describes with the epithet of *lorpidum* (in Rabelais, *lourpidon*, a sorceress). This old lady had involved him in trouble with his mother, by reporting to the latter the follies (*folies*) of which public rumor accused the mischievous scholar. While the old lady was saying her malicious rosary to the detriment of Pierre Faifeu, this knavish young master adroitly stole from her girdle the key to her house, and went to seek a daughter of joy with whom he was on good terms, and

*When the little city maids
Find a lover bold,
Flashing a diamond, I am told,
Before the eyes of the merry dears,
Heigh-ho! they fall on their rears.

shut her up all alone in the old lady's bedroom; then, having restored the key to the place from which he had taken it, he proceeded to arouse the people of the quarter, by telling them that la Macée was keeping a *putain* locked up in her house.

*Pour la livrer à qui elle l'a promise
Pour son plaisir, comme vraye macquerelle.**

The crowd surrounds the house and cries out against the devout Macée. Then, Faifeu runs to the house of his mother and tells her, feigning indignation:

*Vous avez tort de croire à ceste vieille!
Qu' il ne soit vray, ma teste soit haschée,
Si maintenant chez elle n'est cachée
Quelque putain, qu'elle garde à quelqu' moine!
Je vous supply si vous n'avez essoine,
Allez-y voir!†*

The mother goes to see: the old woman herself takes her, but the latter believes she is the victim of a diabolic illusion, and does nothing but cross herself in the midst of the whoops and insults which pursue her, until she sees, upon opening her door, a daughter of joy *atournée*, that is to say, clad in the attire and the insignia of Prostitution.

*To give her to the one she's promised
The maid for his pleasure, like a true macquerelle.

†You do a wrong to credit this old hag!
If I speak false, my head shall pay,
If she does not have hidden away
Some whore she's keeping for some friar,
If you think I am a liar,
Come see!

CHAPTER XXIV

IF EROTIC philology might find a place in a general history of Prostitution, we would devote to it a number of very new and very interesting chapters; for there exists as yet no special work containing a fundamental study of the origins of the language, or rather of the jargon, of the bad houses. This language which might be called technical, is barely indicated in a few ancient French dictionaries, whereas a majority of the Greek and Latin glossaries accord it a large place, and mingle it, so to speak, without any scruple, with the language of oratory and of literature. Nothing would be easier then, than to extract from the glossaries devoted to the ancient and classical languages everything which concerns ancient Prostitution, and the learned P. Pierhugues has not gone to much expense of erudition in compiling his *Glossarium Eroticum Linguae Latinae*, the most curious articles in which have come out of the note book of an excellent philologist, the Baron de Schonen, whose fine works on the Greek erotics have placed him in the first rank of modern scholars. But everything is yet to do in coming at a knowledge of the old erotic French tongue; the materials are innumerable, and yet, they have never been collected and put into the form of a work of scholarship. If, as Boileau says,

Le latin dans les mots brave l'honnêteté,

(the Latin in its words braves decency), the French is more modest, or at least, more timid and crafty. This erotic language, so rich and frequently so ingenious, it must be recognized, delights only in bits of gay facetiousness, in libertine romances, in smutty poems, in joyous *contes*, and in ordure-laden *chansons*. It is, moreover, disinherited by the language properly so-called,

and has been absolutely banished from vocabularies, into which it only creeps sometimes under a convenient disguise; but this tongue still exists with its original genius, and is perpetuated from mouth to mouth by tradition, keeping its own archaisms, its metaphors, its images, its proverbs, even its onomatopoeias. This obscene language might be compared to the argot of thieves and the lower classes. It has its reason for being, and although it has no echo in the language of respectable folk, although it is outlawed by grammar, and although it does not teach the humanities, it is eternally vivacious and never grows old, for the reason that its inspiration never changes and it never has to seek a new subject.

One might easily prove, in a philologic study on the jargon of Prostitution, that this jargon is contemporary with the vulgar tongue, and that it has been formed by a confused mixture of all idioms and all dialects, as though it had the pretension to represent a universal language. There are, as a matter of fact, in this strange jargon, born of caprice and occasion, a multitude of words which have not left behind them their national character, and which have become French, while remaining Greek, Latin, Italian, German or Spanish. It would seem as though Prostitution, which was always, by its nature, vagabond and roaming, had established among its subjects of both sexes, a conventional language, one spoken and understood equally in various provinces of France, at a period when neighboring cities were frequently strangers to each other on account of their patois.

An old French raconteur has freely parodied the story reported by Herodotus, which attributes to Psammeticus, King of Egypt, a bizarre device for discovering that primitive language which was the mother of all others. According to our author, the question had arisen as to what was the first word of the French language, and the academies had declared themselves incompetent in the face of this thorny question. The master of arts who had taken up the solution of this difficult question, conceived the idea, one day when he was at leisure, of going to consult upon this point

a *light woman*, reflecting, as he did, that fools frequently have an innate and hidden wisdom. "Have you ever had an affair with mutes?" he demanded of her in doctoral fashion. . . . "As with others," she replied. . . . "Well, then, my life, have you never drawn from them one single Christian word?" . . . "*Oui, bien*," she replied, "they know how to say *hic* and *hoc*." . . . "Those are Latin words, it seems to me." . . . "Not at all, my seigneur; they are *this* and *that*." This facetious story deserves to be quoted in support of the venerable antiquity of the erotic jargon.

The work which treats of this mysterious jargon with the greatest etymologic detail is, assuredly, the commentary of Jacob Leduchat on the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel*. The respectable Leduchat, although a Protestant, was a philologist who did not scruple to call things by their right names, and who in a matter of erudition found nothing too crude or too nude. We shall then send our readers to this celebrated commentary, which another philologist, Éloy Johanneau, has brought to completion in the same style, improving upon the quintessential obscenities of Rabelais. There is a third commentator of Rabelais who has devoted his attention more particularly to studying the erotic tongue in his favorite author; it is the very learned and very pantagruelic Abbot of Aulnaye, who, at the age of eighty years or thereabouts, has published a good edition of Rabelais (Paris, Desoer, 1820, 3 volumes in-12; a new edition with considerable additions by Louis Janet, Paris, 1823, 3 volumes in-8.) Under the title of *Erotica Verba* he has inserted in the third volume of his edition a little glossary of which Rabelais is not the only source, and which is a little lacking when it comes to developing the explanation of the terms. The audacious Abbot no doubt recoiled before the dangers of his material, although he has placed his pornologic essay under the auspices of the following distich of Tabourot, who had taken as a device: *A tous accords*, and who was so in accord with the old spirit of French gaiety:

*Putidulum scriptoris opus ne despice, namque
Si lasciva legis, in geniosa leges.*

This glossary simply records, in alphabetic order, the locutions, most of which are very ancient, without adding any etymologic or historic commentary which might explain them. The *Dictionnaire Comique* of Leroux, which has been reprinted three or four times in the course of the last century, offers without doubt a nomenclature that is a good deal less complete than that of the *Erotica Verba* of Stanislas de l'Aulnaye, but it follows each word with some citation which tends to fix the sense. This comic dictionary, unfortunately, is lacking in critical erudition, and the compiler, who was far from being familiar with the best sources of the old tongue, made no scruple in rendering his subject still more scabrous by means of definitions which frequently surpassed the indecency of the words themselves.

We shall not approach, even with reserve, a subject which offers such difficulties, but shall limit ourselves to remarking that the erotic French tongue, which is very clearly marked from the time of the thirteenth century, and which is greatly given to pleonasm and to redundancy, translates for its own use words from foreign languages, or appropriates them as they stand with their native consonance, seeking metaphorical images, reveling in equivocations and incessantly bearing the monotony of ordinary discourse by means of the most singular philologic combinations. It might be said that all the words, all the phrases of the general language, could be at need applied to this particular language, which in this manner enriched itself at the expense of all technology. The erotic tongue, as the Abbot of Aulnaye observes, is, undoubtedly, one of the richest of all the technical languages. Thus, in the sixteenth century, for example, there were not less than three hundred words or periphrases for expressing the venereal act (*acte vénérien*: see this word in the *Erotica Verba*). As to the genital parts of the man and the woman, they were represented by four hundred different names,

distinguished by their picturesque variety and their singular attributes.

But there is one chapter in the erotic language which belongs essentially to a history of Prostitution; that is with regard to the popular terms by which women of evil life were known, at certain periods and under certain circumstances; these were the ignoble or infamous soubriquets given to these shameful creatures; these were synonyms more or less veiled which had been invented to describe the houses of debauchery under their various aspects. We have already explained etymologically the ordinary names of the public women, of their procurers, their lovers and their dwellings in the thirteenth century. But this special nomenclature did not remain stationary, but was later increased by the impure imaginations of poets and raconteurs. That was how, in the sixteenth century, the French language came to be over-laden with erotic excrescences resembling those warts produced by the plague of Naples.

It will be sufficient to cite here the long enumeration of public women (*filles publiques*) given by the Abbot of Aulnaye in his glossary. We shall reproduce below a few of those bizarre names which are to be gleaned from his books, in order later to interpret them and seek their true sense:

“(1) *Accrocheuses*, (2) *alicaïres*, (3) *ambubayes*, (4) *bagasses*, (5) *balances de boucher qui pèsent toutes sortes de viandes*, (6) *barathres*, (7) *bassara*, (8) *bezoches*, (9) *blanchisseuses de tuyaux de pipe*, (10) *bonsoirs*, (11) *bourbeteuses*, (12) *braydonnes*, (13) *caignardières*, (14) *cailles*, (15) *cambrouses*, (16) *contonnières*, (17) *champisses*, (18) *cloistrières*, (19) *cocquattris*, (20) *coignées*, (21) *courieuses*, (22) *courtisanes*, (23) *demoiselles du marais*, (24) *drouïnes*, (25) *druës*, (26) *ensoignantes*, (27) *esquoceresses*, (28) *femmes de court talon*, (29) *femmes folles de leur corps*, (30) *folles d’amour*, (31) *filles de joie*, (32) *filles de jubilation*, (33) *fillettes de pis*, (34) *folles femmes*, (35) *folieuses*, (36) *galloises*, (37) *janneçons*, (38) *gast*, (39) *gaultières*, (40) *gaupes*, (41) *gondines*, (42) *godinettes*, (43) *gouges*, (44) *gouïnes*, (45) *gourgandines*,

(46) *grues*, (47) *harrebanes*, (48) *hollières*, (49) *hores*, (50) *hourieuses*, (51) *hourrières*, (52) *lesbines*, (53) *lescheresses*, (54) *lévriers d'amour*, (55) *linottes coëffées*, (56) *loudières*, (57) *louves*, (58) *lyces*, (59) *mandrounos*, (60) *manefles*, (61) *maranes*, (62) *maraudes*, (63) *martingales*, (64) *maximas*, (65), *mochés*, (66) *mousequines*, (67) *pannanesses*, (68) *pautonnières*, (69) *femmes de péché*, (70) *pèlerines de Vénus*, (71) *pellices*, (72) *personnières*, (73) *posoères*, (74) *postiqueuses*, (75) *presentières*, (76) *prêtresses de Vénus*, (77) *rafaitières*, (78) *femmes de mal recepte*, (79) *redresseuses*, (80) *revéleuses*, (81) *ribauldes*, (82) *ricaldes*, (83) *rigobetes*, (84) *roussecaignes*, (85) *sacs de nuit*, (86) *saffrettes*, (87) *sourdites*, (88) *scaldrines*, (89) *tendrières de bouche et de reins*, (90) *tireuses de vinaigre*, (91) *toupies*, (92) *touses*, (93) *trottières*, (94) *viagères*, (95) *femmes de vie*, (96) *villotières*, (97) *voyagères*, (98) *wauves*, (99) *usagères*, etc."

Among these names, not all of which have passed from the written into the spoken language, or reciprocally, there are to be remarked a number borrowed from Greek and Latin antiquity, and which are as a consequence, purely literary; Alicaires, *alicairie*; ambubayes, *ambubaiae*; bassara (Greek) *bassara*; lesbines for *lesbiennes* (the French word); maximas, *maximae*; moches, *moechae*; pellices, *pellices*; barathres, *barathra*. A small number of names are imitated from the Italian, from the Spanish, from the low-Breton, from the Provencal and from the langue d'oc; bagasses, *bagasse*; scaldrines, *sgualdrine*; ricaldes, *ricalde*, *gast*, *mandrounous* and *manefles*. There are some names which, out of contempt or pleasantry, may be looked upon as suggestive of moral or physical analogies between prostitutes and various animals: *cailles*, *coquatrix* (crocodiles), *levriers d'amour*, *linottes coëffées*, *louves*, *lyces* (bitches of the chase), *roussecaignes* (red bitches in the *langue d'oc*), *wauves* (male wolves).

Certain names contain an allusion to the wandering and vagabond life of these unfortunate creatures: *bourbeteuses*, those who splash in the mud; *champisses*, those who live in the fields; *cantonnières*, those who are cantoned at the street corner; *gaultières*,

those who frequent the bushes (from gault, copse, wood); *hollières*, those who frequently change their places of habitation (from holler, to run); *postiqueuses*, those who run post haste; *maraudes*, those who go here and there; *troupies*, those who turn to the right and to the left; *trottières*, those who trot about day and night; *viagères*, those who are always on the highway; *voyagères*, those who voyage or travel.

A number of names have to do with the indecent details of the trade of public women; *bezoches* (mattocks); *drués*; *hourrières* (*piocheuses*, or diggers, who work in the vineyard with the *hourre*); *coignées*; *escoqueresses* (*ecosseuses*, or shellers); *martingales* (those who double the stakes); *whores* (those who are paid by the hour); *pautonnières* (female boatmen or ferry women); *posoères* (those who pose); *présentières* (those who present or offer); *refaitières* (those who readjust); *redresseuses*; *reveleuses* or rather *releveuses*; *touses* (those who clip); etc. The joyous life ordinarily led by prostitutes and their lovers is indicated in the multitude of names which are equivalent to daughters of joy (*filles de joie*): *galloises* (from *galle*, gaiety); *goudines* or *gaudines* (from *gaudere*, to rejoice); *gouines* (from *goyr*, to enjoy); *rigobetes* (from *rigober*, to live fast, *faire la vie*), etc. The different species of public women are indicated by different names; *accrocheuses*, those who hook passers-by; *bonsoirs*, those who attract customers by saying *good evening*; *braydonnes*, those who set *lime twigs* or *brays*; *cloistrières*, those who do not come out of the clavier; *caignardières*, those who haunt the company of beggars; *courieuses* and *courtisanes*, those who dwell in the Courts of Love; *demoiselles du marais*, those who always have their feet in the mud; *drouines*, those who always carry their utensils with them, like the *drouineurs*, or perambulating *braziers*; *ensoignantes*, those who cure their clients; *grues*, those who wait at the corners of streets; *lescheresses*, those who follow the abominable trade of the Roman *fellatrices*; *loudières*, those whose only property is a wretched pallet; *maranes*, those who by their swarthy skin and curly hair reveal a gypsy or Moorish origin; *musequines*,

those who rouge and adorn themselves; *pannaneses*, those who only adorn themselves with *panne*, or fustian; *sourdites*, those who have fallen into vice as a result of seduction; *saffrettes*, those who wear a gilded girdle and embroideries of gold or silver, called *saffre*; *villotières*, those who know the haystacks, called *villotes*.

These periphrases, most of which come from some proverbial locution, say clearly enough what they are intended to say and do not require any commentary, even when they involve a licentious word-play like *femmes de vie* and *fillettes de pis*. Certain names have been drawn from the language of the customary codes, such as *personnières*, those who share in an action, accomplices; *usagères*, lands vaguely belonging to the commune, etc. Other names have become generic on account of the ordinary quality of the women who bear them or receive them, even though these names may have been originally those of saints, disguised and corrupted, like *Janneton*, diminutive of Jeanne, and *Margot*, diminutive of Marguerite. Finally, a number of names, like *cambrouses*, *barrebanes*, etc., which have not yet been explained, would demand a long philological inquiry, which we shall not undertake here.

The Abbot of Aulnaye, in his nomenclature of the synonyms employed in the sixteenth century to describe prostitutes, has been guilty of a number of omissions, among which we shall merely mark the following: *gaures*, the sense of which is sufficiently obscure; *gorres*, sows; *fiquenelles*, from *frisque*, gallant; *images*, that is to say, painted and rouged; *poupines* and *poupinettes*, like dolls; *bringues*, by onomatopoeia, frisking or wriggling; *bagues*, in a figurative sense; *sucrées*, *paillasses* and *paillardes*, those who sleep on straw; *brimballeouses*, those who ring the bell; *seraines*, or sirens, *chouettes*, birds of night; *capres* or *chevres* (nanny-goats) on account of their lubricity; *ancelles* or servant maids; *guallefretières* that is to say, calkers of vessels; *veaultres*, from which has come *peaulx*, sailors' girls; *gallières*, those who love joy, or *galle*; *consoeurs*, or sisters by alliance; *bas culz*, etc. The *Dictionnaire Comique* of Leroux, which we have

not brought into requisition, would add, perhaps, a score of low and gross names which the authors of the sixteenth century had collected from the mire of Prostitution; and which Beroalde de Verville has set like diamonds in the crown of his *Moyen de Parvenir*. As to periphrases invented to express the same object in all its phases, they are innumerable and bear, in general, the unmistakable mintage of French wit. We shall not endeavor to add a single one to those which the Abbot of Aulnaye has taken the care to collect, as though to give us an idea of all the others which might have been gleaned in his footsteps.

One of these periphrases, "women with the short heel" (*femmes au court talon*), would not be rendered comprehensible by the simple citation of a proverb which has been formulated in the following couplet:

*Mais le beaulte de la court
C'est d'avoir le talon court.**

A passage from the fifth book of Rabelais shows us what it meant *avoir le talon court*. In speaking of the rejuvenation which the Reine de la Quinte worked upon the old woman, Rabelais observes that, after having been rejuvenated, "they had heels shorter than before, which was the reason why, whenever they met men, they were very facilely subject to falling on their behinds."

Despite this multitude of nicknames of every sort, applied to women of evil life, their name par excellence was always putain, which was not entirely banished from respectable language until the end of the reign of Louis XIV, for it is still to be found in the comedies of Molière. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was to be found everywhere, in the pleas of advocates, in the sermons of preachers, in books of morality, jurisprudence and history, and in works of poetry and literature. It is to be encountered even in the books written by women. The Abbott of Aulnaye

*But the beauty of the court
Has become a heel that's short.

has cited four proverbs, containing the wisdom of nations on the subject of the putain, expressed with a candor sufficiently gross:

*Amour de putain, feu d'étoupes,**

*Putain fait comme corneille:
Plus se lave, plus noire est-elle.†*

*Quand maistre coud et putain file,
Petite pratique est en ville.‡*

*Jamais putain n'aima preud'hom,
Ny grasse geline chapon.§*

Two other proverbs relative to light women prove that the popular good sense frequently attached a moral meaning to words which suggested an indecent thought, in order, so to speak, to place the remedy beside the evil.

Folles femmes n'aiment que pour pasture.¶

*Femme folle à la messe,
Femme molle à la fesse.***

If in this abundant nomenclature, the name *catin* does not figure, it is for the reason that it was not introduced into the erotic language until an epoch very near our own. *Catin* has long been

*Love of a whore is fire to oakum.

†A whore is like a crow:
The more they wash the blacker they grow.

‡When master doth stitch and whore doth spin,
There's a little custom the town within.

§If whores ever loved good men,
Then a capon surely would fat a hen.

¶Light women love only good pasturage.

**A woman who is light at mass
Is a woman soft of ass.

used as a diminutive of *Catherine*, a name much in use among the women of the people; this name had become synonymous with *poupee*, for the reason that it was the one given by children to their dolls; from there, the name passed naturally enough to debauched women, who did not marry, but remained virgins all their life, which was called *coiffer Sainte Catherine*. From *catin* came *cataut* and the change of termination did not rehabilitate this diminutive.

The infamous place in which Prostitution had its seat, the *bordel*, which makes its appearance in the satires of Bollicau and the tales of Voltaire, does not appear to have inspired the verve of the synonym-makers. The Abbot of Aulnay reports but five or six, which were not even commonly employed in the language of the people, but which were reserved for the written tongue. He cites *eschevinage*, which appears to involve a dirty word play; *curatrie*, which awakens the idea of a *cure* or prevend; *clapoir*, which is derived from *clapier*, *putefy*, which indicates the fief of whores (*putes*); *peaultre*, one who stretches out on a ferry boat; *paillre*, which shows us that these places did not have any other beds than piles of straw and hay, etc. But the word *bordel* was always retained by preference, although the situation of the place itself and its regime had changed completely as a result of the ordinances of legal Prostitution. The *bordes*, which had been the first retreats of public debauchery, did not exist any longer, except in a few cities in the provinces, at the period when the women of dissolute life had the right to keep a *bordel* (*tenir bordel*) in certain infamous streets where they paid a tax and lived by their trade under the guardianship of the municipal police.

The lovers, companions and pimps (*souteneurs*) of these lost women, all those shameful parasites of Prostitution, were always branded with the generic name of *maquereaux*, but they had taken to themselves other nicknames which sounded better to their own ears. They called themselves and were sometimes called: *gouliards* and *gouliafres*, because they devoured the product of the immodest commerce of their sorry companions; *chalends*, because they were inmates of the house; *paillards* from their beds of

straw; *holliers*, *mouliers* and *houlleurs*, because they ran about the country with their *coureuses*; *lescheors* and *lescheurs*, because they grew fat at the expense of the dripping-pan of the place; *maquignons* and *courratiers*, or *courtiers*, because they aided the indecent traffic of their sweethearts; *francs-gontiers*, *gastouers*, *étalons*, *casse-museaux*, *calinaires* or *calins*, *lesbins* and *lapins*, etc. The contemptible men who devoted themselves thus to this most hideous form of concubinage, and who drew from it their only revenues, were the depositaries if not the inventors of the argot of Prostitution, and in the taverns, where they passed the day in drinking, gaming, blaspheming and sleeping, they did not fail to reveal the depravation of their manners by that of their language.

As to the dishonored women who mingled in the secret traffic of Prostitution, they were marked out to the contempt and hatred of honest folk by the generic name of *maquerelles*. This descriptive name corresponded to all the conditions of their abominable trade, and it was employed indifferently in the most elevated work as in the lowest language. The court poets of the sixteenth century did not fear to employ it in accordance with the example of jurisconsults and legalists. It would seem that this name, which was not excluded from respectable language before the seventeenth century, was formerly sufficient for all needs. Those who felt a repugnance to its use would say *courtière* or *courratière*; the words *entremetteuse* and *appreilleuses* did not come until later, and they smell of the academic style. Recourse was also had to periphrases which bear witness to the intention of flattering the susceptibility of these ladies; “ambassadors of love” (*ambassadrices, d’amour*); “conciliators of good will” (*conciliatrices des volontés*); “merchants of fresh flesh” (*marchandes de chair fraîche*); “sentinels of love” (*sentinelles d’amour*), etc. Those who practiced this odious and lucrative trade, and who had so great an influence over the manners of our ancestors, met only with maledictions and outrages everywhere; the libertine himself, who made use of them for his pleasure, was under no

illusion as to their infamy; it was not, happily, young women who conducted "the business of maquerellage;" it was old women.

The portrait of an old woman of this sort was composed in verse by a poet of the sixteenth century; it is a very remarkable fragment, attributed to Francois Rabelais, in the first complete edition of his works (Lyons, Jean Martin, 1558), and which had appeared in 1554 in a collection of poems by Francois Habert. This Habert was a friend of Rabelais, and it may be supposed that he had desired to save from forgetfulness the "*Epistles to Two Old Women of Different Manners*" (*Epîtres a deux vieilles de diferentes moeurs*), which Rabelais, then curé of Meudon, could not publish and had no desire to publish under his own name. We are brought back to our subject in the poetic blazon (*blason*) of the evil old woman, whom we find, trait for trait, in the Sibyl of Tanzoust, who also figures among the allegoric personages of the *Pantagruel*:

*Vieille édenté, infâme et malheureuse,
Vieille sans grace, aux vertus rigoureuse,
Vieille en qui gist trahison et querelle,
Vieille truande, inique maquerelle,
Vieille qui rendz les pucelles d'honneur,
Femmes aussy, en crime, et déshonneur:
Vieille qui n'eus oncq charité aulcune,
Vieille troursjours pleine d'ire et rancune,
Vieille de qui l'infâme et layde peau
En puanteur passe un sale drapeau:
Vieille laquelle on ne veid oncq bien dire
D'homme vivant, mais tousjours en médire:
Vieille qui n'as oncq beu vin meslé d'eau,
Vieille qui fays de ton lict un bordeau;
Vieille qui as la tetasse propice
Pour en enfer d'un diable estre nourrice:
Vieille qui as l'art magique exercé
Plus qu'oncq ne feist et Médée et Circé . . .*

*Vieille meschante, exécration et infecte,
 Qui de ta voix les éléments infecte;
 Ne crains-tu point, vieille, que de tes faictz
 Qui devant Dieu sont sales et infaictz,
 Tu soys un jour amèrement punie?
 Penses-tu-bien demourer impune,
 Vieille maudicte, ayant tant de pucelles
 Mises au train de folles estinnnelles,
 Ayant vendu contre droict et raison
 Femmes d'honneur et de bonne maison!**

The energetic colors of this *blason* of an old woman, whom the author does not name, were certainly employed later by Mathurin Reginer, in the portrait of his Macette, who is the prototype of the hucksters (*regrattières*) of Prostitution in the time of Henri IV.

*Toothless old hag and infamous old wench,
 Graceless old dame, given to virtue's stench,
 Old in the treasons of hell's querulous imp,
 Filthy old bawd and brazenest she-pimp,
 Who traffics boldly in maidens' honor fair
 To make them, and grown women, debonnair,
 Without a drop of charity, I ween,
 But always full of wrath and bitter spleen,
 Old woman with by far a filthier skin
 Than the flag they use to wrap a soldier in,
 Who never once, I'll vouch for it, was heard
 To speak of any living a kindly word,
 Wine mixed with water is her daily drink,
 She finds her bed there where the brothels stink,
 Old woman with a very fitting breast
 To give a devil in hell his suckling rest,
 Who is in magic art more deeply versed
 Than Circe or Medea, that twain accursed,
 Old, execrable and infected rake,
 From her the elements infection take,
 Do you not fear old woman, when you die,
 That dread accounting when you go on high,
 And that you will one day be punished there?
 Do you think to escape it everywhere?
 You who with all your sorry bawds and bangles
 Seduce young girls with all your silly spangles,
 Plying your trade without a rhyme or reason,
 Selling woman's honor in and out of season!

CHAPTER XXV

LEGAL Prostitution would seem to have acquired everything it needed for its regular development; it possessed its code, its usages, its customs, its privileges, its subjects (*suppôts*) and even its language. It lived almost on good terms, so to speak, with the ecclesiastical and civil authorities; it reigned, so to speak, on certain streets at certain hours, in accordance with certain conditions by the urban police; it formed an integral part of the organization of the body social, "those *secret parts*," according to the bizarre expression of an old author, "which modesty bids us to hide, but which cannot be cut off without killing good manners, which are as the head and heart of a decent nation." But aside of this legal Prostitution avowed or tolerated by the political powers, there were still to be found traces, almost effaced, it is true, and very degenerate, of guest and religious Prostitution, those two ancient companions of paganism among primitive peoples.

Religious Prostitution, properly so called, existed obscurely in the traditional cult of a few saints, to whom popular superstition had assigned the obscene attributes of Pan, of Priapus and of the old lares; but these were but rare exceptions, in connection with certain mysterious pilgrimages made to strange chapels which remained pagan under Christian names. These immodest reminiscences of idolatry were buried as it were in the depths of the country, and so no scandal was reflected upon the glorious mantle of the Catholic and Roman church. Religious Prostitution had assumed more brazen attraction with the aid of the incessant heresies which sprung up in the very bosom of the religion of Jesus Christ, the scattered germs of Manicheism being constantly renewed. Manicheism had engendered the heresy of the Vaudois, and *la vauderie*, although extirpated by steel and fire, shot forth stunted branches here and there which bore only impure fruit, a

fruit which soon fell in the flames of the pyre. It would not be without interest to seek in the extinct cinders of these Manichean and Vaudois heresies the living principle of religious Prostitution.

This Prostitution had been perpetrated and enrooted in another form of heresy, which, springing from the same source, had taken on a character wholly different from that of Manicheism, and which appeared to have developed in an opposite direction. Sorcery, in instituting the cult of demons, had not failed to make use of Prostitution as a powerful means of material action on its execrable adepts. This infernal Prostitution, product of an unheard of depravity of the imagination, served as the invisible bond between sorceresses of all ages and all countries, and this it was which was the soul of their infamous assemblages.

As to guest-Prostitution, that naïve and credulous sister of religious Prostitution, she still showed herself from time to time in the sanctuary of the domestic fireside; a disordered and super-excited imagination was, ordinarily, to blame. This was a reflection of the beliefs and mysteries of paganism. Carnal relations between spirits and men and women passed then as an incontestable fact, and this cursed commerce which the Church for long had looked upon as one of the gravest symptoms of demoniacal possession, opened the door to a number of secret debaucheries. The immodest superstition, relating to incubi and succubi, had its origin in habits of guest-Prostitution, and Christians of both sexes were easily persuaded that they might have lubricious relations with demons and with angels who shared equally one sex in the other, just as the pagans had cohabited with their lares, or at some time even entered into direct communication with Fauns, Satyrs, Nymphs, Naiads, and the half-gods of the fields.

Our next task, then, is to examine Prostitution in the Middle Ages under its three distinct faces: in the form of heresy, in the form of sorcery, and in the superstition pertaining to *incubi* and *succubi*.

These demons,* whom the Gauls called *dusiens* or *druses* (*drusii*), were still practicing their violences and their nocturnal seductions at the period when Saint Augustine recognized their existence and their evil deeds, by declaring it would have been an impudence to deny a fact so well established: *Ut hoc negare impudentiae videatur*. A number of Fathers of the Church, however, among others Saint John Chryostom, (*Homily 22 on Genesis*), had cast a doubt upon the deeds of lust commonly attributed to the demons generally known as incubi and succubi. But the Hebraic assigned to these demons an origin contemporary to that of the first men, and the Christian church adopted the opinion of the rabbis in their interpretation of the famous chapter of *Genesis*, where we see the sons of God taking for wives the daughters of men and procreating a race of giants. The doctors and the councils, nevertheless, did not go so far as the Jewish interpreters, who related the legends of the demon as though the thing had taken place under their own eyes† thus, according to these venerable personages, “during the 130 years that Adam abstained from relations with his wife, there came to him female devils who became large with child of him, and who slept with devils, spirits, nocturnal spectres and phantoms.” (*The Enchanted World*, by Balthazar Bekker, Amsterdam, 1694, four volumes in 12 mo. See volume I, p. 162.) These rabbis and demonologists, once they had become engaged in placing the genealogy of these demons of the night, did not stop short; they discovered that, if our father Adam had had an affair with a succubus, Eve had also had carnal relations with an incubus, which must thus have wrought perfidiously the multiplication of the human kind!

However this may be with respect to these regions of the antediluvian world, the existence of incubi and succubi was not doubted by anyone, and to them were attributed all the evil effects of the nightmare; for these inconvenient guests, who visited

*Cf. The use which Huysmans makes of this superstition in “*La-Bas*.” Here again Huysmans might have drawn on our author, at least for sources.

†Cf. Jewish cabolistic lore as revealed, for example, in “*The Dybbuk*,” a lore which appears to flourish more particularly in such semi-barbarous countries as old Russia.

lads and lassies during their sleep, were not always after their chastity; they sometimes came to sit upon them, breathing into their ears a thousand senseless dreams; or perhaps they weighted the chest of the sleeper, who felt a sensation of stifling and who would awaken, finally, full of fright, trembling and covered with an icy sweat in the midst of darkness. But more ordinarily, this demon, sometimes male and sometimes female, sometimes equipped alternately or simultaneously with both sexes, would execute another vengeance upon the victim who had been chosen and who had been rendered defenseless by a leaden sleep. Lass or lad, the involuntary accomplice of the evil spirits' pleasures, would lose virginity and innocence without ever making the acquaintance of the invisible being whose hideous caresses were merely felt. Upon awakening, the victim could not doubt the immodest oppression to which he had been subjected, when he saw, upon his couch, the irrefutable evidence in the form of stains.

Such was the general opinion not only of the people, but also of the most enlightened and most eminent men. "Everywhere," says the pious Guibert de Nogent, in the memoirs of his life (*De Vita Sua*, Book I, Chap. 13), "one finds thousands of examples cited of demons who make love to women and introduce themselves into the latter's beds. If decency permitted us, we might relate many of these amours of demons, of which some are truly atrocious in the torments which the poor victims had to suffer, while in other cases the demons were content with assuaging their lubricity." These demons were quite different from one another in humor and caprice: some made love like true lovers, whom they endeavored to resemble in all points; others, not so great novices it may be, or more perverse at any rate, indulged in incredible excesses of debauchery; the majority were not distinguished from the commonalty of men so far as the results of their passion was concerned; but some gave evidence of their superior nature by means of prodigies of lust and incontinence.

The conduct of the victims toward these nocturnal oppressors, or *ephialtes*, was also quite different in various cases: some soon accustomed themselves to the approach of the familiar demon and lived on good terms with him; others experienced in this damnable commerce, as much aversion for themselves as for their tyrant; nearly all kept silent as to what took place in these sacrilegious unions, which the Church, turning away its eyes in horror, branded with an anathema. "It only remains to show," remarked the reverend father Costadau, in the middle of the 17th century, "how the demons might have this carnal intercourse with men and with women; but the material is too obscene to be expressed in our language." (*Traité Histor. et Crit. Des Principaux Signes Qui Servent à Manifester les Pensées ou le Commerce des Esprits*; Lyon, Bruyset 1720, Vol. V, p. 137.) It was thus easier to speak of the deeds of the incubi and succubi in the Latin language.*

The writings of theologians, philosophers, physicians and demonologists of the Middle Ages are filled with circumstantial observations of the subject of the incubi and the succubi who found many more believers before science had explained their misdemeanors in a natural fashion. Christianity had accepted, and had charged to the account of the Devil and his subjects, those detestable acts of violence and seduction which paganism, from highest antiquity, had attributed to its subordinate gods and to the demons of the night. In each case, there was the same fantastic works of Prostitution; but the invisible spirits guilty of these works were not detested by the pagans as they were by the Christians, who were commanded by the Church to defend themselves incessantly against these snares of Hell. However, if the common opinion cast no doubt on the horrible deeds of these evil spirits against the human species during sleep, philosophy, on the other hand, had loudly denied these deeds, as soon as it had made an examination of the facts and had determined the phenomena of nightmare.

*See Hudson's *Law of Psychic Phenomena* for an exposition of the causes, workings, etc. of such dreams. (J. U. N.'s Note.)

Incubus was the name given to the demon who took the form of a man in order to have relations with a woman, sleeping or waking. This word derives from the latin *incubare*, which signifies *to sleep upon someone*. The Greek name for *incubus* was *ephialtes*, a *leaping* or *insulting* (*insultor*) demon who ran over someone. In an old manuscript *Glossary*, cited by Ducange, the word *incuba* or *surgeseur* is accompanied with this definition: "*Incubi vel incubones*, a manner of devils who are accustomed to deal with women." Ducange also borrows from the *Glosses* (*Glossae*) on the medical works of Alexander of Tralles, a passage which proves that scholars formerly had confused under the term of incubus the demon of nightmare and the suffering which it caused the sleeper; "*Incubus, est passio in qua dormientes suffocari et à daemonibus opprimi videntur.*" The etymology of *succubus* does not differ from that of *incubus* except in the difference of the role played by the demon, transformed into a woman. It is our opinion that we should read *succubare* for *cubare sub*, to be couched under someone. And yet, Ducange does not admit this word and its derivative in his *Glossary*, though the low-Latin writers might have been able to fill up this lacuna.

The succubi, it is true, are rarer than the incubi in the stories of the Middle Ages, but these latter, despite exorcisms and ecclesiastical penalties, did not leave in peace the wives and daughters of our ancestors. After having worked their miracles in the legends of saints, they are to be found displaying their infamies on the page of authentic history. Gregory of Tours relates to us the death of the perfect of Mummolus, (Book VI) who sent obscene demons to the Gaelic ladies whom he desired to damn. The same chronicler gives us to understand that Satan himself did not disdain upon occasion to indulge in this pastime. A saintly Bishop of Auvergne, Éparchius by name, awoke one night with the idea of going to pray in his church; he arose to go there and found the basilica flooded with an infernal light and filled with demons who were committing abominations in front of the altar; he saw, seated in the episcopal chair, Satan in the habits of a woman and presiding over these iniquitous mysteries. "Infamous courtes-

san!" he cried to him, "you are not content with infecting everything with your profanation; you even come to soil the seat consecrated to God with your disgusting body. Leave the house of God!—" "Since you call me a courtesan," replied the Prince of demons, "I shall stretch many snares for you by inflaming you with the love of women." Satan vanished in a cloud of smoke, but he kept his word and caused Éparchius to feel all the tortures of carnal concupiscence. (Gregory of Tours, Book II, Chapter 21.)

An historian quite as grave as Gregory of Tours, one Guibert de Nogent, related five centuries later, and with the same good faith, the insults that his mother had had to endure on the part of incubi, who were incessantly attracted by the beauty of this holy woman. One night, during a painful insomnia, as she was bathing her couch with her tears, "the demon, according to his custom, which is to assail hearts rent with sorrow, suddenly appeared before her sleepless eyes and oppressed her to the point of death with a stifling wake. The poor woman could neither move, nor cry out, nor breathe, but she inwardly implored divine aid, which was not lacking to her; her good angel at the pillow of her bed, cried out in a sweet and supplicating voice: Saint Mary, aid us! and then hurled himself upon the incubus to drive him away. The latter reared upon his feet and attempted to ward off this unexpected attack, but the angel turned him a backward somersault upon the floor, with such a fracas that his fall awoke the whole house. The servants woke up and came running to their mistress' bed, who, pale, trembling and half dead with fear, informed them of the danger she had faced, the marks of which she bore." (*Guibert De Vita Sua*, Book I, Chap. 13.)

The good angels were not always there to aid women in their weakness, and the Devil then had the advantage. But the Church might still reclaim its prey, as witness the memorable exorcism which is to be met in the life of Saint Bernard, written shortly after his death. A certain woman of Nantes had relations with a demon who came to visit her every night while she was sleeping with her husband; the latter never awoke. At the end of six

years of this frightful cohabitation, the sinner, who had never boasted of her sins, made a clean breast of everything to her confessor and afterward to her husband, who abandoned her in horror. The incubus remained the sole possessor of his victim. This poor wretch knew, from the very mouth of her abominable lover, that the illustrious Saint Bernard was coming to Nantes; she awaited with impatience the arrival of the Saint and went to cast herself at his feet, beseeching him to deliver her from her diabolic obsession. Saint Bernard ordered her to make the sign of the Cross as she went to bed and to place beside her in her bed a cudgel which he gave her. "If the demon comes," he said to her, "do not fear him any more; I defy him to approach you." In short, the incubus appeared as usual to usurp the rights of the husband; but he finds the cudgel of Saint Bernard guarding the bed of this woman. He could merely run around the bed with mad threats; an insurmountable barrier had been placed between them. The following Sunday Saint Bernard betook himself to the cathedral with the Bishop of Nantes and Chartres; an immense crowd had paid money to receive his benediction; he distributed lighted candles to all who assisted at the mass, and he related to them the story of the deplorable woman who had been devoted to the pleasures of the Devil; finally he exorcised the evil spirit and forbade him by the authority of Jesus Christ ever to torment this woman or any other again. After the exorcism, he ordered that all the candles be extinguished at once, and the power of the incubus was extinguished at the same time.

If Saint Bernard did not doubt the reality of this execrable commerce between succubi and women, we should not be scandalized at finding Saint Thomas Aquinas so occupied at length with these audacious demons in his *Summa Theologiae* (quaestio LI, art. 3.) The authority of these two great Saints was quite sufficient excuse for those unfortunate ones to believe that, despite of themselves, they were victims of this strange form of Prostitution, and who did not possess in the form of a preservative talisman, the cudgel of Saint Bernard. Nothing was more frequent than revelations of this sort in the tribunal of confession, and

the confessor found in his penitents a conviction of the fact which he was combatting, only too often futilely, by means of prayers or exorcisms. Pope Innocent VIII was not any more superstitious than his contemporaries when, in an apostolic letter, he recognized in these terms the existence of incubi and succubi: "*Non sine ingenti molestiâ ad nostrum pervenit auditum complures utriusque sexus personas, propriæ salutis immemores et a fide catholica deviantes, daemonibus incubis et succubis abuti.*" There was not only the religious confessional which unveiled the mysteries of incubism and succubism; it was, especially, those forced or voluntary confessions which the Inquisition wrung from the defendants in the innumerable sorcery trials, who fed the gallows and the pyres in all the countries of Europe.

It had always been the imagination alone which was guilty of all those nocturnal works attributed to the Devil; but it was the belief of the ancients that the night belonged to the infernal spirits, and that the sleep of man was thus exposed to the malice of these artisans of sin. These later were accused thus of employing dreams to tempt sleeping sinners. "Principally," says the learned Antonio de Torquemada, "the Devil tries to make the sleeper fall into the sin of lust, making him dream of carnal pleasures, until he is stained with pollutions, in such a manner that, while we delight in them asleep, as soon as we are awake, we perceive that they are to us the cause of mortal sin." (See the *Hexameron*, translated from the Spanish by Gabriel Chappuys (Rouen, *Roman de Beauvais*, 1610 in-16). Bayle, in his *Response aux Questions d'un Provincial*, reports on this subject the doctrine of the casuists touching those dreams which for a long time were charged to the account of the incubi and the succubi: the most relaxed agree that we are obliged to pray to God to deliver us from impure dreams; and that, if one has done things during the evening, which are proper to exciting impurities in sleep, if one has no regret on the morrow at having taken pleasure in these dreams, or if one endeavors by artifice to cause them to return, in such a case one sins." (*Oeuvres de Bayle*, Vol. III, p. 563.)

It may be said, in a manner, that the incubi and succubi are born in the convents of men and women, for the ascetic life marvelously predisposes mind and body to this involuntary Prostitution which is realized in dreams, and which mysticism looks on as the work of nocturnal demons. "The religiously devout," says Bayle, "attribute to the malice of Satan the evil thoughts which come to them; and if they remark an unwonted keenness in their sensations, they imagine that the demon is persecuting them, that he is drawn near, that he is besieging them, and finally that he is taking possession of their bodies." The biographies of a number of these saints, who were martyrs of their own senses, inform us of the temptations they had to undergo in guarding their purity and escaping the violence or the seductions of evil angels. A nun of Saint Ursula of the community of Vannes, named Armelle Nicolas, "a poor idiot girl, a peasant by birth and a servant maid by condition," as her biographer describes her, provides us with one of the last examples of this empire which the Devil was supposed to exert at once over the body and the morals of these ignorant, credulous and passionate recluses. This Armelle, who lived at the end of the 17th century, had begun by seeking exultation in the ardours of divine love, before finding herself at grips with the incubi: "it seemed to her," says the anonymous author of *École du Pur Amour de Dieu, Ouverte aux Scavants et aux Ignorants* (page 34, new edition, Cologne, 1704, 12 mo.), "it seemed to her that she was always in the company of demons, who provoked her incessantly to give herself to them. During the five or six months that the heat of the combat lasted, it was practically impossible for her to sleep at night, on account of the frightful spectres who took various horrible and monstrous forms." The poor religious resisted these hideous tempters as firmly as she could, but they, in place of putting on more agreeable masks in order to win her by persuasion, became indignant at her refusal and mistreated her cruelly.

Another mystic, Angela of Foligno, whose diabolic temptations Martin del Rio has described in his *Disquisitiones Magicae* (Book II, section 24), also had an affair with gross demons who beat

her pitilessly after having inspired in her evil desires which they merely utilized for their own damnable sensuality. There was in all her body no part which was not bruised by the attacks of these incubi to such an extent that she could not move or even rise from her bed. "*Non est in me membrum,*" she said, "*quod non sit percussum, tortum et poenatum a daemonibus, et semper sum infirma et semper stupefacta et plena doloribus in omnibus membris meis.*" The incubi, however, did not achieve their ends, although they did not cease to torment her day and night. According to the best informed demonologists, a demon destined to the role of incubus, would take the form of a little, black and hairy man, but still preserve something of the nature of giants, as a glorious reminiscence of his paternal origin. We find in the interrogatories of many of the sorcery trials, evidence of these enormities, which undoubtedly only existed in the depraved imaginations of the victims.

This disparate commerce with an incubus sometimes came to be a regular thing, and the unfortunate one who endured it against her will, or who even became accustomed to it, from a taste for debauchery, would remain thus in the power of the demon for whole years. She ended then by bearing patiently this strange servitude and by coming to like it. More than one possessed woman was cited, who had a love for the Devil, and who corresponded with him. Jean Wier relates that in his time a young religious named Gertrude, age 14 years, slept every night with Satan in person, and Satan had so won her love, that she would write to him in the tenderest and most impassioned terms. In an execution of justice which was made at the abbey of Nazareth, near Cologne, where this religious had introduced her infernal gallant, there was discovered on the 25th of March, 1565, in her cell, a love letter addressed to Satan, and this letter was filled with frightful details concerning their nocturnal debaucheries.

There is a lack of agreement as to the nature of the licentious tastes which these incubi possessed, and controversial demonology found free play for its speculations on this point. The celebrated De Lancre assures us that demons did not compromise

themselves with virgins; Bodin positively states the contrary; Martin del Rio assures us that the demons have a horror of sodomy and bestiality; Priérias looks upon them as the first inventors of these infamous practices. This divergence of opinion as to the degree of perversity to be attributed to the evil spirit merely indicates, more or less clearly, the depravation of the casuists who concerned themselves with these delicate questions. It is our duty regretfully to leaf through them in this chapter devoted, so to speak, to diabolic Prostitution. We shall not endeavor, however, to define the nature of the impossibility of sexual relations between a demon and a virgin. De Lancre, in his *Tableau de l'Inconstance des Mauvais Anges et Démons* (Page 218), relates that a young girl had said to him "that the Devil has not yet grown accustomed to having relations with virgins for the reason that he cannot commit adultery with them; and so, he waits until they are married." We have here, on the part of the Devil, a refinement of malice; for he judged that it was not sufficiently as great a sin to corrupt a virgin and so preserved his forces for adultery. And yet, in other passages in his book, (pages 134, 224 and 225), De Lancre gives us to understand that the Devil had compassion on the weakness of *pucelles*, rather than on their innocence. "If I did not fear to defile your imagination," remarks the Abbé Bordon, in the curious *Histoire des Imaginations de M. Oufle*, "I should report here what the demonographers have to relate concerning the pains which women suffer when they have relations with devils and why they suffer these pains."

It would appear to be demonstrated, however, by the confessions of a multitude of sorceresses and possessed women who pretended to have had "carnal copulation" with the Devil from the ages of ten or twelve years, that the tempter did not always wait until his victims were in a state of marriage to approach them. The demonographers, without entering into special details regarding the defloration of virgins by incubi, indicate a number of these unfortunate ones who knew the Devil before the age of puberty. It is to be remarked always that these were, for the most part, the daughters of sorceresses, who had been devoted to the

Devil and his works at birth. Jeanne Herviller of Verberie, near Compiègne, who was condemned as her mother had been before her, by decree of a Parliament of Paris to be burned alive, confessed that her mother had presented her to the Devil "in the form of a great black man and clad in black, booted, spurred, with a sword at his side and a black horse at the door." Jeanne Herviller was then twelve years old, and from the day of this presentation, the "Devil slept carnally with her, in the same sort of manner as do men with their wives, except that his semen was cold. This," she said, "happened every eight or fifteen days, even while she was couched beside her husband, without the latter's perceiving it." It is Bodin who has reported this fact in his *Démonomanie*.

Two or three facts of the same sort, also collected by Bodin, would indicate that certain incubi, more expert or more depraved than the others, were jealous of the ordinary privileges of the newly married husband. In 1545, the Abbess of a monastery of Spain, Madeleine de la Croix, went to cast herself at the feet of Pope Paul III and to demand absolution of him, confessing that from the age of twelve years she had sacrificed her honor to an evil spirit "in the form of a black Moor," and that she had kept up this execrable commerce for thirty years. "It is my opinion," adds Bodin, "that she was dedicated to Satan by her parents from her mother's belly, for she confessed that Satan had appeared to her from the age of six years, which is the age of knowledge on the part of girls, and that he had solicited her at the age of twelve, which is the age of puberty in girls." Another Spanish damsel, who had been deflowered by the Devil at the age of eighteen years, refused to repent of what she had done and was burned in an *auto-da-fé*.

Two species of incubi were implicitly recognized, the hot and the cold. Antonio de Torquemada, after Psellus and Mérula, explains in a singular fashion the invasion of a masculine body by certain cold devils. "However great enemies of men the devils may be," he says in his *Hexameron*, "they do not enter men's bodies so much with the desire to do evil as from a desire

for a revivifying warmth; for the devils are those who dwell in the deepest and coldest places, where the cold is so pure that it is exempt from humidity, and for this reason, they desire warm and humid places.” However this may be, when a devil had entered a human body, or when he was merely in the offing, he would reveal his presence by the incredible warmth which he produced in all those parts which might come in contact with him. Thus, Saint Angelina of Foligno, who had constantly to guard herself from solicitations by the Devil, would feel upon his approach such a fire in the organs of generation that she was forced to apply to these organs a hot iron in order to extinguish the conflagration which had been developed in them under the influence of this infernal lubricity. Following is the manner in which she tells the thing: *Nam in locis verecundis est tantum ignis, quo consuevi apponere ignem materiale ad exstinguendum ignem concupiscentiae.* (See *Disquis. Magicæ* of Martin del Rio, Vol. II, sec. 24.)

Despite the internal or external embrace, which was a feature of this nocturnal cohabitation with the incubi, the chief frigidity of the latter was always felt in one matter or another in the very act of their shameful obsession. Bodin, after having mentioned the feeling of cold and horror which those possessed of the demon experienced in the midst of their hideous transports, goes on to say that “such copulations are not illusions or maladies,” and he affirms that they do not differ from ordinary sexual relations, “except that the semen is cold.” He gives an extract from the interrogatories, conducted in the presence of Maître Adrien de Fer, Lieutenant General of Laon, of the sorceresses of Longni, who were condemned to the flames for having had relations with incubi. Marguerite Brémont, wife of Noel de Lavaret, confessed that she had been led one evening, by her own mother, into a meadow where a company of sorceresses was gathered: “Finding in this place six devils who were of human form but very hideous to see, etc. When the dance had been finished, the devils laid down with them and had their company; and one of them, who had danced with her, kissed her twice and cohabited with her

for the space of more than half an hour, but his semen was very cold. Jeanne Guillemen confirms this, and says that they were a good half hour together and that he spilled his semen which was very cold." (See the *Démonomanie des Sorciers*, Book II, Chapter 7.)

Jean Bodin remarks a circumstance that is wholly analogous in the trial of the sorceress of Bièvre, who was tried and condemned in 1556, in the *justice* of the seigneur of Boue, bailiff of Vermandois. This sorceress "confessed that Satan (whom she called her companion) had her company ordinarily, and that she had felt that his semen was cold."

The historians and jurisconsults of sorcery do not limit themselves to reporting this strange detail; but they endeavor to seek the cause and imagine that they have divined it in relying upon the authority of Saint Thomas Aquinas. "Some," remarks the naïve and ferocious Bodin, "hold that those demons known as hyphialtes or succubi receive the semen of men and then make use of it in their intercourse with women as ephialtes or incubi, as Thomas Aquinas says, a thing which seems incredible." Bodin, who is astonished at nothing, to be found in the most sinister archani of demonomania, finds the explanation of this diabolic phenomena in a verse of the Bible before which commentators have remained mute and confused: "And it may be that the passage of the Law of God which says: Cursed be he who gives his seed to Moloch, may be applied to them."

This was not the only distinctive characteristic of these demons. The infectious odor which the Devil exhaled from all his members (hence a proverbial locution still in use; to stink like the Devil) was communicated almost immediately to the men and women he visited. These latter began to stink in their turn, and they were recognized by the infection of their breath. Bodin says, after Cardan, "that the evil spirits are stinking, and the place which they inhabit is stinking, and he believes that it was for this reason that the ancients called sorceresses *foetentes*, while the Gascons called them *fetilleres*, on account of their stink, which comes, as I believe, from copulation with devils. All the dem-

onographers are agreed as to this horrible stench, which ordinarily marked the passage of the Devil, and which came out of the mouths of those possessed of the Devil. "One may judge," says Bodin, "that women who naturally have a sweeter breath than men by their acquaintance with Satan become hideous, dreary, ugly and stinking against nature."

This was not all: this abominable commerce with incubi bore sometimes monstrous proof, and the Devil was pleased thus to introduce into the human race his own offspring. In this manner were to be explained all aberrations in the process of generation. Monsters had, then, their reason for being. "Spranger writes that the Germans (who have more experiences with the sorceresses, since these creatures have existed there from the most remote antiquity and in greater number than in other countries) hold that from such copulation there come sometimes children who are called Wechsel-Kind or changeling-children (*enfants changez*)* who were sometimes heavier than the others, and always emaciated, and can drain three nurses dry without becoming fat." (See the *Démonomanie des Sorciers*, Book II, Chapter 7.) Martin Luther, in his *Colloquies*, recognizes the truth of this fact, all the more disinterestedly for the reason that he himself had been accused of being one of these children of the Devil, whom the lower classes of the Ile-de-France called *champsis*, that is to say, those who have been found or conceived in the fields.

In the thirteenth century, a bishop of Troyes, named Guichard, was accused of being the son of an incubus, described as *Petun*, who, it was said, made all the imps servants to his well loved son. (See *Nouveaux Mémoires de l'Acad. des Anscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Volume VI, page 603.) The incubi had, then, a talent for procreating children so well formed as not to be too out of place in the world. But in general, their abortive offspring were frightful counterfeits of humanity. Bodin thus speaks of a monster of this sort who was born in 1565 in the town of Chemir, near

*Cf. Oberon's "changeling boy," *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II., Scene 2. Cf. also the *Erlokoenig* legend (*Wer reitet so spaet durch Nacht und Wind?*) etc.

Bresleau, whose mother was a sorceress and whose father was Satan. He was "a hideous monster, without head and without feet, the mouth on the left shoulder of the color of fire, which gave forth a terrible clamor when it was washed." Bodin goes on to cite a number of diverse opinions with regard to the results of diabolic Prostitution. "The other sorceresses," he says, "beget devils in the guise of children who have copulation with witch-nurses, and one frequently does not know what they become thereafter. But as to such copulation with demons, St. Hieronymus, St. Augustine, St. Chrysostum and St. Gregory the Nazarene hold, against Lactantius and Josephus, that nothing comes of it; but that if something does come of it, it will be a devil incarnate rather than a man."*

The vulgar, however, did not doubt that the Devil had the faculty of reproducing himself under human features, and those who had been begotten by him were succubi. It might be concluded from this that the majority of the liaisons of incubism were sterile. "The sorcerer who has copulation with the Devil as with a woman," says Bodin, "is not an incubus or an ephialtes, but a hyphialtes, or succubus." He previously relates a number of stories of succubi, vouched for by Spranger, Cardan and Pic de la Mirandole. Spranger reports that a German sorcerer "indulged in such copulation in the presence of his wife and his companions, who saw him engaged in the act without seeing the form of the woman." Pic de la Mirandole had known a sorcerer-priest, named Benoît Berne, who, at the age of eighty years, had had copulation "more than forty times with one disguised as a woman, who accompanied him without anyone's perceiving it, and who was called Hermione." Cardan cites another priest, aged seventy years, who had cohabited for more than fifty years with a demon "in the guise of a woman."

It is to be remarked that these incubi devoted their attention ordinarily to the youngest and most beautiful women, whom they besieged by night, while the succubi attacked by preference young

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) "There were giants in the earth in those days." *Genesis*, VI. 4.

and handsome lads. As to the sorcerers and sorceresses who went to seek in witches' sabbaths those detestable pleasures which the Devil never refused them in this monstrous melange of both sexes and all ages, they were almost always ugly, old and repulsive. One might, then, look on incubism as a sort of initiation into sorcery, which trampled under foot all modesty, and which pushed libertinism to the last conceivable limits. Quite often the incubus did not meet with any compliance on the part of the one whom he desired and solicited; this was, in a manner, but the prelude to sin. The sorcerer, on the contrary, already perverted and possessed of the Devil, allowed himself to be dragged down to his own ruin, and lived by the practice of the works of darkness. It is, therefore, permissible to make a very definite distinction between incubism and sorcery, by saying that the one was the Prostitution of old women, and the other the Prostitution of the young.

Despite so many facts, so many confessions, so many declarations, and so many memorable examples, certain demonographers have denied the existence of the incubi and succubi. The learned astrologist, Agrippa, and the celebrated physician, Wier, put upon the imagination the chief blame attached to these nocturnal demons. "Those woman are melancholy," says the latter, "who think they do what they do not do." The most enlightened physicians of the fifteenth century were already of this opinion, and yet, in the seventeenth century, when witches who confessed to having had the "carnal company" of the Devil were still being burned, the theory of incubi and succubi was still being discussed in the schools and in the academies.*

The last time this bizarre thesis was debated in France, from the point of view at once of religion and science, was in the conferences of the celebrated Bureau d'Adresse, which the physician, Théophrastus Renadot, had established at Paris as part of the Faculty of Medicine and the French Academy. These conferences, which were held once or twice a week in the great hall of

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) See Huysman's *La Bas* for a presentation of the scientific fact that incubi and succubi can be produced at will by adepts. It is this on which I have founded a scene in my poem *Judith*.

the Bureau d'Adresse, situated in the rue de la Calandre in the Cité, brought together a large audience which was very attentive in listening to the orators who took part in the discussion. The most thorny questions were there debated, and Théophrastus Renadot with an imperturbable gravity directed the debate in person, a debate which frequently exceeded the limits of what was then called *l'honnêteté* and what we call decency; but orators and audience meant no malice, each being eager to know and to learn. In the 128th conference, which was opened on Monday, the 9th of February, 1637, a *curieux de la nature*, as amateurs in physics and the natural sciences were then called, brought this question before the house: "Of incubi and succubi, and whether demons can produce offspring." The subject was not new, but it was piquant and singular. Four orators at once enrolled to speak on it in their turn. The first who took the floor must have been a physician, little in sympathy with the incubi and succubi, whom he regarded as the effects of a malady called ephialtes by the Greeks and *pezard* by the vulgar, and which he defined as "an impairment of the respiration, of the voice and of movement, with oppression of body, which gives us the impression as we sleep, of some weight on the stomach." According to him, the cause of this malady "is a gross vapor issuing principally from the rear of the brain, and preventing the movement of the animal spirit destined to the movement of the parts." He went on to bring out the point that the vulgar attribute these disorders to the Evil Spirit rather than to the "malignity of a vapor or of some gross and pituitous humor which creates an oppression in the ventricle, the coldness and weakness of which, produced by the lack of spirits and of warmth, and holding all the parts in arrest, are the most manifest causes of this disturbance." He concludes as a consequence that this morbid state in which the Devil counts for nothing cannot determine generation, "which being an effect of the natural faculty and of a vegetating soul cannot be proper to the Devil who is a pure spirit."

This theory of generation must have produced a lively curiosity in the assembly, which had no suspicion of the faculties of the

“vegetating soul” (*âme végétante*); but the second orator, who was a scholar nourished on the Greek and Latin classics, undertook the defense of the demons, and endeavored to prove the reality of their “copulations with men, the which cannot be denied, without giving the lie to an infinity of persons of all ages, sexes and conditions who have told what has happened to them.” He then cited a number of illustrious personages of antiquity and of the Middle Ages who had been begotten by the false gods or demons; he cited as true incubi the fauns, satyrs and, principal one among them, Pan.* called *Haza* by the Hebrews, as the chief of incubi, and *Lilith* as the chief of succubi; he cited the *Néfésoliens*, whom the Turks looked upon as being the offspring of demons, “either from their habit of carrying off a strange woman, almost in an instant, and by this means preserving her spirits and preventing their transpiration, or by their own virtue, since everything that is done naturally, such as the making of semen, can also be done by demons. Even though they may not be able to produce a proper semen, it does not follow from that that they cannot produce a perfect creature.”

There were ladies present who did not lose a word of this scientific dissertation. The third orator recognized as an incontestible fact the commerce of incubi and succubi with men; but he was disposed to believe that these evil spirits were incapable of begetting their kind, and he gave the following reasons: “For the succubus, it is certain that it cannot engender in itself, for lack of a place convenient for receiving the semen and giving its artful power, and from lack of blood for nourishing the foetus during nine months.” He did not solve the question quite so resolutely with regard to the incubus. We recall the three principal conditions requisite for generation: “diversity of sex, copulation of the male and the female, and the outflow of some matter which contains in itself the formative virtue of those parts from which it issues.” He recognized the fact that the Devil might, at need, meet the first two conditions, “but never the last, which is a proper

*Cf., here and later, Arthur Machen’s treatment of Celtic legend, classic myth and Catholic ritual.

and viable semen, dowered with spirit and a vital warmth, without which it is unfecund and sterile. For this semen is in itself nothing, since it is simply what remains of the last coction, which is not produced in other than a body actually living, such as is not the case with a demon; and this semen, after it has been spilled from the vessel of nature, cannot be fecundated from lack of those spirits which can only be preserved by an irradiation of the noble parts in the spermatic vessels."

The fourth orator, a wise and prudent man, sought to relieve the anxiety of the audience by declaring that "there is nothing supernatural in the incubus, which is nothing but a symptom of the animal faculty, accompanied by three circumstances, namely, impeded respiration, retarded movement and a voluptuous imagination." He then went on to rehabilitate the nightmare, which he explained in its causes and in its effects; he terminated the discussion with a piece of advice addressed to those present, whom he urged not to sleep upon their backs,* and to guard themselves against the peril of a voluptuous imagination, "produced by an abundance or the quality of the semen, the which sending its species into the fantasy, the fantasy forms for itself an agreeable object and acts on the motive power, and this induces the expulsive faculty of the spermatic vessels." Everybody left highly satisfied with these learned investigations in the world of enchantment, a world into which the famous Bekker had not yet brought the light of doubt and of reason. (See the *Recueil Général des Questions Traictées es Conférences du Bureau d'Adresse*, Paris, Souvron, 1656, 5 Volumes in-8.)

From the time of Théophrastus Renadot down to our own era, theology and science continued to concern themselves with incubi and succubi, which were too completely enthroned in popular credulity to be readily dethroned. The misdeeds of these subordinate demons are still, to this day, highly accredited among the inhabitants of the country districts. Voltaire mocked them with his inflexible good sense; but he came near being accused of

*The phenomenon known to the modern medical man as nocturnal emissions, which may be favored by sleeping on the back.

a lack of respect for the Devil, by disputing the latter's ancient prerogatives. Before Voltaire, an ordinary physician to the King, M. de Saint-André, had touched on the true causes of this superstition, in his *Lettres au Sujet de la Magic, des Maléfices et des Sorciers* (Paris, J.-B. de Maudouyt, 1725, in-12), a superstition which he endeavored to destroy: "The incubus most frequently is a chimera, which has no foundation except dream, and injured imagination (*imagination blessée*)* and frequently exists only in the imagination of women Artifice plays no less a part in the history of incubi. A woman, a girl, a devout lady of family, a debauchee, who effects to appear virtuous in order to hide her crime and so passes her lover off as an incubus who besieges her. . . . There are succubi as there are incubi, and they ordinarily have no more basis than dream, a wounded imagination, and sometimes the artifice of men. A man who has heard tell of succubi, imagines in his sleep, that he sees the most beautiful women and that he has their company. . . ."

M. de Saint André sums up thus, with much good judgment, the circumstances surrounding the superstitions of incubi and succubi, and one cannot but praise him for having given evidence of so much wisdom at a period when the casuists and the doctors of the Sorbonne did not hesitate to recognize the generative power of the Devil. Thus, Père Costadau, who, in truth, was but a Jesuit, but very learned, and a very good fellow in his house, wrote thus, as this same epoch, in his celebrated *Traité des Signes*: "The thing is too singular to be believed in lightly. . . . We should not believe it ourselves if we were not convinced on the one hand of the power of the Devil and of his malice, and if, on the other hand we did not find an infinitude of writers, and even writers of the first rank, popes, theologians and philosophers, who have sustained and proved the point that incubi and succubi of this sort may exist; but those folk must be unhappy enough who indulge in this shameful commerce, which is of all the most execrable." (Volume V, page 182.)

*Dream *trauma*. Cf. the Freudians.

The Church and Parliament had made laws against these unfortunate beings, in the conviction that these creatures, even despite themselves, shared an infernal Prostitution, and that it was only the flames of the pyre which could efface this horrible stain, after penitence had failed to bring the sinner back into the path of pardon. The victims of incubism and succubism had a certain indulgence to invoke, if they were able to present themselves as having been seduced and forced; but ecclesiastical and civil jurisprudence were impitiable toward another sort of diabolic Prostitution, that of sorcerers and sorceresses, who gave themselves of their own free will to Satan in person, and who indulged in all sorts of abominations in their nocturnal assemblages. Such were, in France as in all Europe, in the sixteenth and even in the seventeenth century, the shameful vestiges of guest and sacred Prostitution.

CHAPTER XXVI

PROSTITUTION under the guise of sorcery was not, like incubism and succubism, an accidental result of diabolic obsession; it was rather the ordinary result of diabolic possession; it was the normal state of men and women deliberately vowed to the Devil; it was in a manner, the resulting scourge of that abominable pact which bound them with the infernal powers, which bound them to him who was called the "Author of Sin." It is, then, certain that sorcery had two principal characteristics, one of which may have been the cause and the other the effect; in some cases it satisfied the most infamous caprices of human perversity; in other cases it employed the intervention of evil spirits in supernatural and unholy works. Thus the principle of sorcery in all ages, consisted in a mutual agreement between man and the Devil; the former submitted himself, body and soul, to the domination of the second, and the latter, in return for this voluntary servitude, shared with his slave in a manner, the occult power which the Supreme Being had left to Satan when he hurled him from the heavens into the abyss. There was, therefore, in the mystery of sorcery, a shameful Prostitution on the part of the human being who thus sold and abandoned himself to the Devil.

It is not hard to understand what must have been the origin of sorcery, which served evidently as a pretext to all the strange disorders associated with a shameful promiscuity. Thus the ancients had a profound contempt for sorcerers, whose secret assemblages were undoubtedly but the conventicles of an execrable debauchery. Legislators and philosophers of antiquity were all agreed on branding and punishing magicians and their hideous companions. And yet, there was no means of knowing, except by conjectures, what took place in their nocturnal meetings; for we find in the Greek and Roman poets only very soft-

ened pictures. There are merely, in Petronius and in Apuleius, two or three passages which permit us to suspect what the poets do not say; the stories which were told of these magic *spinthries* and of their voluptuous dances always found incredulous ones who meant no malice thereby. Horace says positively, in a number of places in his odes and his epistles, that the old sorceresses committed enormous indecencies by the light of the moon, and that at night, in the fields and in the woods, the young lads would go to mingle with the choir of nymphs and satyrs (*nympharumque leves cum satyris chori*, I., 1). These meetings were not always the same as the witches' sabbath of the Middle Ages, with its monstrous horrors, which appear to have been the invention of the Devil, and which were well calculated to accredit the Devil's power.

The true witches' sabbath (*sabbat*), however, had already found a place among the peoples of the North, whom sorcery inspired to all the most depraved distractions of the imagination. These peoples were still too near a primitive state of simple nature not to feel drawn by their brutal passions to all sorts of excesses; superstition, which came to the aid of their gross sensuality, found them always very docile subjects. The Roman emperors, in order to maintain their authority over conquered countries, endeavored to destroy magic along with its adepts and its indomitable practices. Gaul in particular was infested with sorcerers and Tiberius could not succeed in purging this Roman province except by declaring implacable warfare on the Druids and on their religion. It would not, perhaps, be out of place to remark here that those demons known as incubi of whom St. Augustine speaks, and whom he calls *dusii* (*quos Galli dusios nuncupant*) were confounded with the Druids by the ancient authors; and Bodin, in citing this same passage, reproduced in the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, adds this observation: "All have made a mistake with respect to the word *dusios*, for the reading should be *drusios*, as though to say "devils of the forest" (*diabes forestiers*), whom the Latins in the same sense called *sylvanos*. It is altogether likely, as St. Augustine remarks,

that our fathers of old called these demons and devils *drusios*, on account of the difference of Druids, who also dwelt in woods." The analogy of the name came rather from a similitude than from a difference between the drusii and the Druids. Christianity merely increased the rigor of persecutions directed against the accomplices of demonomania. It was under the reign of the Emperor Galens (364-378) that the burning of sorcerers probably started; but sorcery and Druidism had sunk profound roots into the manners of the Gauls, roots which could not be extirpated by iron and fire, even after centuries of bloody efforts. It is clear that Druidism and sorcery included from then on, in their habits, or at least in their ceremonies, a multitude of scandalous details pertaining to guest and religious Prostitution.

However, there is a question, in the Christian authors, of the nocturnal assemblages of sorcery before the sixth or the seventh century. All the codes of the barbaric peoples, the Ripuarian law, the Salic law, the law of the Burgundians and that of the Germans contained merely a terrible penalty against sorcerers and sorceresses, or *stryges*, without, however, accusing them of diabolic Prostitution. The most ancient written document which makes mention of the witches' sabbath, or of a shady congregation of women assembled for a mysterious purpose and indulging in magic incantations, is a capitulary the date of which has not been fixed in an authentic manner, and which is not, perhaps, of a date earlier than Charlemagne. (See the collection of Baluse, *Capitularia Regum*, fragment, c. 13.) This capitulary does not even give us very explicit information as to those aerial voyages which the sorceresses were believed to make in the company of Diana and of Herodias, mounted upon fantastic beasts, which probably conveyed them to a common rendezvous. Following is a curious passage, which would appear to belong to the canons of a council, a passage which has been subject to frequent corruptions: "*Illud etiam non est omittendum quod quaedam sceleratae mulieres, retro post Satanam conversae, daemonum illusionibus et phantasmatibus seductae, credunt et profitentur se nocturnis horis, cum Diana, dea paganorum, vel cum Herodiade*

et innumera multitudine mulierum, equitare super quasdam bestias, et multarum terrarum spacia intempestae noctis silentio pertransire, ejusque jussionibus velut dominae obedire, et certis noctibus ad ejus servitium evocari." It is easy to recognize here the departure of the sorceresses for the sabbath, but we do not witness their arrival, and we do not know what they came there to do. It is permissible to suppose that these villainous beasts whom they rode in the air, were none other than demons, whom we later see serving as mounts to the sorcerers.

We cannot doubt that this was the sabbath, that is to say, in illicit assemblage, in which a cult was paid to a demon, and this cult must have been accompanied by indecencies, enormities and infamies such as were the ordinary practices of sorcerers; but if the thing existed, the word did not yet exist, for it is our opinion that the word *sabbath* does not date from prior to the twelfth century. This, however, had not prevented scholars from deriving this word from the name of Bacchus, for the reason that the Bacchanalians had some sort of a connection with these nocturnal orgies which were celebrated in honor of the Devil by means of dances, feasts and debaucheries; but it is evident that this learned etymology, despite the assonance of the words *sabbat* and *Bacchus* is impossible from the point of view of chronology. It would be best then, to adhere to an etymology which is the most natural one: "The people who have given the name of sabbath to an assemblage of sorcerers," says Dom Calmet in his *Traité sur les Apparitions des Esprits*, "has apparently desired to compare derisively these assemblages to those of the Jews and the practices of the latter in their synagogues on the Sabbath day." All those demonographers who have been ashamed to be looked on as ignorant have been stubborn in seeing the origin of the witches' sabbath in the fetes of Bacchus. Thus, according to Leleoyer, in his book *Des Spectres* (Book IV, chapter 3), the initiates sang *Saboé* at the Bacchanalia while the sorceresses at their sabbath cried: *Har sabat! sabat!* but it is more probable that the Christians, who had no less horror for the Jews than did the sorcerers, affected to confound the two in the same general

reprobation by attributing to them the same cult, the same manners and the same profanation.

The most ancient description of the diabolic sabbath is to be found in a letter of Pope Gregory IX, addressed collectively to the Archbishop of Mayence, the Bishop of Hildesheim and to Doctor Conrad in 1234, with the object of denouncing the initiations of the Stadingian heretics: "When they receive a novice," says Gregory IX, "and when this novice enters their assemblages for the first time, he sees a toad of enormous size, the size of a goose or larger. Some kiss it on the mouth, others on the behind. Then this novice meets a pale man with very black eyes and so thin that he is nothing but skin and bones; he kisses him and at once feels cold as ice. After this kiss, he easily forgets the Catholic faith. Finally, they make a feast together, after which a black cat descends behind a statue which is ordinarily reared in their place of assembly. The novice first kisses this cat on the behind; then he kisses the one who presides over the assemblage, and the others who are worthy of it. The imperfect ones receive only the kiss of the master, they promise obedience; after which they put out the lights and commit among themselves all sorts of impurities," (See the *Hist. Ecclés.* of Fleury, Volume XVII, page 53.) Here we have the witches' sabbath which the sixteenth century has frequently described for us with such a wealth of detail.* But this assemblage of Stadingian heretics although similar to those of the sorcerers shows us Prostitution in the form of heresy rather than, as yet, in the form of sorcery.

The sabbath, properly so-called, whether or not it goes back to the most remote antiquity, was not well known until the fifteenth century, when the inquisition concerned itself with it seriously in the course of a multitude of trials, in which the poor sorcerers enumerated with a sort of pride the monstrous marvels of which they had been the witnesses, actors and accomplices. It is from the interrogatories to which these foolish and perverse creatures were subjected that we are able to discern with certitude that the

*Cf., e. g., the paintings of Goya, which Baudelaire so loved.

principal works of Prostitution had foreseen the sabbath of the sorcerers. The majority of the historians who have collected these lamentable archives of human superstition were endowed with a robust and unshakable faith, and were only too ready to attribute to the Devil all the crimes which the latter's credulous subjects placed upon his shoulders. After having presented a small number of these saddening recitals, we shall remain convinced that if the imagination had an invincible influence upon the sensations of the demonomaniacs, fraud and trickery frequently abused their moral weakness to the profit of the lubricity of some and at the expense of the modesty of others.

The sorceresses he desired to go to the sabbath prepared themselves for it by means of invocations, unclothed themselves entirely, greased their bodies with a certain ointment, and, at the appointed hour, at a signal agreed upon, with a *ramon* or broom between their legs, they would raise themselves in the air to a considerable height, after escaping from their domiciles by means of the chimneys. Ordinarily, they would meet at the neck of the chimney a troop of little devils whose only business was to transport them through space. Sometimes they crouched on the shoulders of these imps, sometimes they hung from their tails or clung to their horns.* They would arrive naked at the sabbath, all gleaming with this magic ointment, which rendered them invisible and impalpable, except for demons and sorcerers. The recipe for the ointment employed by the familiars of the sabbath may still be found formulated in the works of magic; but it has undoubtedly lost its virtue, for it is no longer employed. Once upon a time it was not without its use in unchaining those forces which each one had to spend in these infernal orgies.

Sorcerers and sorceresses, once anointed with their magic grease, would arrive, then, at the sabbath and return from it naked. This complete nudity is sufficient evidence that the sabbath was the rendezvous of an abominable Prostitution. Bodin relates a number of stories the responsibility for which must be

* (J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf. Le Sage's *Asmodeus on The Devil on Two Sticks*.

left him, with the object of showing us how women and men went to these nocturnal assemblages. A poor man, who dwelt near Loches in Touraine, perceived that his wife was absent all night under pretext of doing her washing with the neighbor woman. He suspected her of debauchery and threatened to kill her if she did not tell the truth. The woman confessed that she had gone to the sabbath and she offered to take her husband with her. "They greased themselves, the two of them," and the Devil transported them through space from Loches to the land of Bordeaux. The husband and wife found themselves there in such a fine company of sorcerers and demons, that the man was afraid, made the sign of the Cross and invoked the name of God. At once everything disappeared, even the wife of this prentice sorcerer, who found himself wholly naked, wandering through the fields until morning."

Following is another anecdote, unlikely enough: A damoiselle was sleeping at Lyons with her lover; the latter was not asleep. The girl arose without noise, lighted a candle, took a box of ointment, and rubbed her body; after which she was "transported." The gallant arose after her, put on the same grease that he had seen his ribaude make use of and pronounced the same magic words, which he had remembered. He arrived at the sabbath on the heels of the girl; but his fright was so great at the sight of the devils and their hideous postures, that he commended his soul to God. "All the company disappeared," says Bodin, "and he found himself alone, wholly naked, and thereupon returned to Lyons, where he brought an accusation against the sorceress, who confessed and was condemned to be burned."

And yet, the employment of an ointment on the naked body of the one who desired to be transported to the sabbath was not always indispensable, especially for the professional sorceresses who had but to place between their legs a broom or a stick in order to be able to fly like an arrow, through the air to the diabolic meeting place. Bodin assures us that this stick or broom was sufficient for the sorceresses of France who rode it very cleverly, "without grease and without unction," whereas the sorcer-

esses of Italy greased themselves from head to foot before mounting the goat which carried them to the sabbath. This difference in the means of aerial transport employed by the sorcerers, explains the difference of their costumes in the ancient engravings representing the mysteries of the sabbath. "Some are naked; they are the ones who are anointed; others are clad; they are those, who," as De Lancre says, "go to the sabbath without being anointed nor greased with anything whatsoever, and are not constrained to pass through the throats of chimneys." The same distinction is to be noted among the sorcerers, of whom the young have no vestments, whereas the old wear long and hooded robes.

The demonologists are not agreed as to what took place at the sabbath: from which it may be concluded that most of what took place there was ridiculous when not infamous. After having read and compared all the descriptions of the sabbath which have come down to us, we realize that this horrible promiscuity of all sexes and ages, could have had but one object, debauchery, and that this debauchery took place in many manners, in the adoration of the goat; in the sacreligious feasts; in obscene dances; and in immodest relations with the demons. These four principal functions of the sabbath, at all times and in all countries, are clearly established by the interrogatories and inquiries in connection with sorcery trials. There is not much to be said as to what the adoration of the goat was like, and we are authorized to believe that the always detestable practices which accompanied the worship varied according to times and places; it consisted ordinarily in a sort of homage, followed by a diabolic investiture, accompanied by the payment of a symbolic revenue, the whole imitated from the usages of Feudalism. The new feudal subject of the Devil accepted him as lord and master, took the oath of vassalage, offered him a revenue or a sacrifice, and received in exchange the stigmata or the brands of Hell. This was the basis of the ceremony, which was practiced in many fashions, with a prodigious and frightful cleverness in the matter of libertinism.

The Devil, who everywhere presided at the sabbath or who was represented there by one of his lieutenants effected, ordinarily,

to take the figure of a gigantic goat, black or white in color, an impure animal which was always the symbol of lubricity. This goat possessed, however, more than one distinguishing characteristic. According to some it had two horns at the front and two at the back of its head, or merely three horns, with a "sort of light" (*espèce de lumière*) in the middle horn; according to others, it bore above the tail "the face of a black man." (See the *Traité de l'Inconstance des Démons* by De Lancre, pages 73 and 128.) The Devil took also the form of certain other animals not less lubricious than the goat. "I have seen some records at Tournelle," relates the genial De Lancre, "which depict the Devil at the sabbath as a great black hound, sometimes as a great bronze bull sleeping on the earth beside a natural bull." Sometimes, Satan or Beelzebub would come to receive the adoration of his subjects, male or female, under the form of a black bird, of the size of a goose.

But in many circumstances, the Devil took the human form, adding to it certain attributes of his infernal power; sometimes he was red, sometimes black; sometimes he had a face at the bottom of his loins; sometimes he was contented with a double face at the front and back of the head like the pagan god Janus. In certain cases he adopted a very strange configuration, the reason for which may be found in a passage from the treatise of Prièrias, which we shall cite further or without daring to translate it: "Others say," reports De Lancre, "that at the sabbath the Devil is like the great trunk of a tree, without arms and without feet, seated in a chair, having somewhat the form of a human face, great and frightful." Finally, after having collected religiously all the opinions relative to the person of the Devil, De Lancre himself sketches the portrait from the life (*d'après le vif*). "The Devil at the sabbath, is seated in a black chair, with a crown of black horns, two horns on the neck, another on the forehead, with which he lights the assembly, bristling hair, the face pale and troubled, the eyes round, great, inflamed, open and hideous, the beard of a goat, and all the rest of the body ill shaped, in the form of a man and a goat, the hands and the

feet like a human creature, save that the fingers are all of the same length, and sharply pointed at the end, armed with nails, and the hands curved in the form of a goose quill, the tail long like that of an ass, with which he covers his shameful parts. He has a frightful voice and without tone and preserves a great and superb gravity, along with the countenance of a melancholy and weary person."

Such was the terrible master to whom the sorceresses and sorcerers took an oath of homage in the assemblages of the sabbath. "There is an infinite number of such folk who adore the goat and kiss him on the hinder parts." It was the famous sorcerer, Trois-Echelles,* who made this declaration, in these very terms, to King Charles IX (See the *Démonomanie*, Book II, Chapter IV). De Lancre speaks, in a number of places, of this shameful kiss which was frequently given to the shameful parts of the Devil: "The behind of the great master," he says (page 76), "has a rear face, and it is the rear face which one kisses and not the behind." But according to the confession of a girl named Jeanne Hortilapits, dwelling at Sare, who was not fourteen years old when she was given to sabbatical Prostitution, "grown-ups kiss the Devil on the behind, while he, on the contrary, kisses little children on the rear." The Devil afterwards urinated in a hole, and the old sorceresses would come up and dip their cocks-plumes in the infected and burning liquid, with which they sprinkled themselves.† We have here, it is plain to be seen, an execrable parody of the ceremonies of the mass.‡ "Sometimes, at the sabbath," relates De Lancre again, "the Devil is adored with one's back turned toward him, with the feet turned up, having lighted a candle of very black pitch on the middle horn, one kisses him on the rear and in the front." In the trial

†(J. U. N's Note:) See Stekel (*The Homosexual Neurosis*) on Coprophagia and Anal Eroticism. The persistence of this last, with pederasty, among all peoples and in all times, should be investigated by the biologists with reference to a possible determination of the origin of sex in a specialization of the organs of excretion.

*Any relation to our "three shell" game?

‡The black mass. See Huysmans' "*La Bas*."

of a number of sorceresses, who were adjudged and condemned to the flames at Verdun in 1445, these unfortunate ones confessed that they were "the servants of all the enemies of Hell," and that they had committed "very enormous sins" (*trés-énormes péchez*). Each of them had a *nom de diablerie*; "one paid homage to a master by kissing his back; another by kissing him on the rear, another by kissing him on the mouth (see the *Histoire des Sciences dans le Pays Messin* by Émile Begin).

In addition to the kiss, there was an offering; and the writers *ex professo* do not state exactly in what this consisted. Was it simply a small piece of money, in pinchbeck, with a fantastic image, such as are to be found in the excavations of Alsace? Was it a mysterious emblem like a serpent's egg, a branch of wood or vervena, a wolf's tooth, or some other object accredited in the works of black magic? We are not disinclined to look upon this offering as an immodest initiation by means of which the neophyte gave herself bodily to Satan and became his feudal subject by means of a carnal act. It has also been supposed that the devil "delivered a little silver (*un pou d'argent*) to those who had kissed his behind. (See the *Chroniques* of Monscrelet, edition of Paris, 1572, in-fol., Volume III, fol. 84).

Then came the diabolic stigmata. The chief of the sabbath, Satan or Beelzebub, was in the habit of branding his adorers as one brands a flock of sheep. This brand was inflicted by the burning extremity of the flaming scepter which the King of Darkness bore in his hand, or with one of his horns. The sorcerers were thus branded on the lips or over the eyebrows, on the right shoulder or on the rump; the women on the rump or under the armpit, on the left eye or on the secret parts. This indelible brand was in the form of a rabbit, a toad's foot, a cat or a dog. These were various signs by which the demoniacal prostitutes were recognizable.

When the adoration was over, with a multitude of practices as bizarre as they were revolting, a fete was celebrated by means of banquets, songs and dances, as a preparation for the works of Prostitution. According to the statements of some sorcerers

more candid than others, these feasts, served upon a cloth of gold, presented for the appetite of the guests, "all sorts of good viands with bread, salt and wine." But according to the majority of eye-witnesses, these feasts consisted only of toads, the flesh of hanged men, cadavers which had been disinterred in the cemeteries, the bodies of infants which had not been baptized, dead beasts, etc., the whole without salt and without wine.* The benediction for this repast was not, however, lacking; there was a procession about the table with lighted candles, and immodest songs were sung in honor of the demon who was king of the feast. It is, therefore, probable that these table orgies had for object the heating of the senses as a preparation for the monstrous acts of Prostitution which accompanied or completed the round of the sabbath.

This round (*ronde*) was executed in many manners, and each one who has described it has done so with new details. There can be no doubt, however, that the principal object of the dance, if it always was a dance, was an odious superexcitation to debauchery; for this dance gave occasion to the most indecent postures, the most infamous pantomimes; the majority of the dancers, male and female, were altogether nude; some *en chemise*, with a great cat attached to their behinds; nearly all of them with horned toads upon their shoulders. As they danced they cried: *Har, har, diable, diable, saute ici, saute là, joue ici, joue là* (Har, har, devil, devil, leap here, leap there, play here, play there); and all the spectators, the old necromancers, the hundred-year-old sorceresses, the venerable demons, would repeat in choir: *Sabbat, sabbat!* There were coryphees of both sexes who did prodigious somersaults and incredible *tours de force* in order to inspire the lubricity of those present and to satisfy the lustful malice of Satan.

The round continued thus till the first streaks of dawn, till cock-crow; and while it lasted, to the sound of infernal instruments and voices, each couple would give themselves, in turn,

*Cf., the witch scene in "*Macbeth*."

with a frenzied ardor, to the most frightful Prostitution. It was then that the fifth capital crime of which sorcerers might become guilty in the sight of human and divine law, was committed: carnal copulation with the Devil. (See the *Démonomanie*, Book IV, Chapter 5.) The jurisconsults of demonomania have endeavored to describe the nature of this crime from the statements of those who had committed it. Following is what Nicolas Remy (*Remigius*) believed to be an established fact on the subject of those unclean caresses which the habitués of the sabbath declared they had received from demons: *Hic igitur, sive vir incubet, sive succubet faemina, liberum in utroque naturae debet esse officium, nihilque omnino intercedere quod id vel minimum moretur atque impediat, si pudor, metus, horror, sensusque aliquis acrior ingruit; illicit ad irritum redeunt omnia e lumbis, effaeaque prorsus sit natura.*" (*Demonolatriae libri tres*, Lugd., 1595, page 55.) It is evident from this that sorcerers were not less exposed than sorceresses to diabolic defilement. On the other hand, more than one theologian, more than one criminologist, has been willing to take up the defense of the demons and to prove that they had a horror of sin against nature, but attempts to defend the Spirit of Evil on this point have not been very successful; for Sylvestre Prièrias, who wrote his famous treatise *De Strigimagarum Daemonumque Mirandis*, under the eyes of the Roman Inquisition, has doctorally sustained the point that sodomy was one of the prerogatives of the Devil: "*Universaliter strigimague, quae in ejusmodi spurcitiis versantur, aliquid turpissimum (quod tamen scribam) astruunt, videlicet daemonem incubum uti membro genitali bifurcato, ut simul in utroque vase abutatur.*" (Edition of Rome, 1575, page 150.) Bayle, in order to express these enormities produced by the unbridled imagination of the demonomaniacs has forged a word which theologians and criminologists do not appear to have adopted: he calls sin *sur-contre-nature* (more than against nature) the alternative or simultaneous use which the hermaphroditic Devil ordinarily made of the sexes at the sabbath.

The inquisitor of Lorraine, Nicolas Remy, curiously undertook the task of establishing the varieties of diabolic copulation; he had interrogated with care the unfortunate victims of diabolic impurity, and he ended by concluding that nothing was more painful than undergoing the caresses of the unclean spirit: *At hoc qui nobis istos concubitas, succubitusque daemonum memorant, uno ore loquentur omnes, nihil iis frigidius, ingratiusque quicquam fingi aut dici posse.* All were in agreement as to the impression of glacial horror which they had felt in the arms of the demon: *frigido, injucundo, atque effaeto coitu.* A great number of sorceresses as a result of this embrace remained infirm or ill for the rest of their days. Nicolas Remy, who imposed no bridle of decency on his questions, had obtained incredible confessions on the part of the *ribaude du diable*; those poor foolish creatures whom the sabbath had early vowed to a mysterious form of Prostitution, and who no longer blushed at unveiling all the details of the frightful commerce which they had had with the demons. One may discern, in a manner, the erotic physiology of Satan from the formal declarations which Nicolas Remy received from the very mouths of the graduate sorceresses of his time, notably from Alice, from Claudine, from Nicole and from Didace, who had frequented the nocturnal assemblages in the Vosges Mountains.

The Latin alone permits us to cite this singular passage, in which the demonologist reviews with a licentious naïveté, the bitter reproaches which the majority of sorceresses address to their incubi: “*Alexia Drigaea recensuit daemone suo penem, cum surrigebat tantum semper exstitisse, quanti essent subices focarii, quos tum forte praesentes digito demonstrabat; scroto, ac coleis nullis inde pendentibus. Claudia Fellaea expertam esse se saepius instarfusi in tantam castitatem turgentis, ut sine magno dolore contineri a quantumvis capace muliere non posset. Cui astipulatur et illud Nicolaeae Moreliae, conquerentis sibi, quoties a tam misero concubitu discedebat, decumbendum perinde fuisse, ac si diutina aliqua, ac vehementi exagitatione fuisset debilitata, Retulit et Didatia Miremontana, se, licet virum multos jam annos*

passa esset, tamen tam vasto, turgidoque daemonis sui inguine extansam semper fuisse, ut substrata lintea largo cruore perfunderet. Et communis fere est omnium querela, perinvitas se a daemone suo comprimere, non prodesse tamen quod obluctantur."* One might believe that Nicolas Remy was endeavoring to prove that the sorceresses in their acts of diabolic Prostitution were less criminal than they were unfortunate, for they never yielded except to constraint and to obsession; they did not even seek in sin the delights which constitute its attraction; they served passively, despite themselves, and groaning as they did so, the execrable pleasures of the demon, without the power to free themselves from this accursed and debasing servitude. The public of the Middle Ages, nevertheless, burned without pity all sorceresses convicted of having "ridden with the Devil" (*chevauché avec le diable*).

It was then a confessed fact that the sabbath, under pretext of sorcery and magic, opened a vague and somber field to the most guilty sort of Prostitution; thus it was not only demons who paid the toll and took the odious profit; it may be supposed that very often the Devil figured in it only metaphorically, but he was always the soul and the thought. The sabbath in general, freed of its infernal and fantastic paraphernalia, became reduced to a congress of debauchery, in which incest, sodomy and bestiality found free reign: De Lancre, without any desire to mitigate the evils which he attributes to the "inconstancy of demons," is obliged himself to confess that the Devil had less part than was commonly reported in the abominations of the sabbath. "The wife," he says (page 137), "disports herself in the presence of her husband, without suspicion or jealousy; or it may be he is merely the procurer; the father deflowers his daughter without shame. The mother takes away the virginity of her son without fear; the brother his sisters, etc." It may be understood

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) It is to be noted that our modern "scientific" spiritists (such men as Lombroso, Flammarion, Doyle, Lodge, et al.) in recounting authenticated instances of wounds received from "ghosts," commonly overlook the probability of the violence having been perpetrated by the recipients themselves.

that every sorcerer was, in the eyes of the law, looked upon as incestuous from the very fact that he had assisted at the sabbath, even though he had no father or mother, no brother nor sister. The ninth crime "common to sorcerers," according to the canons of the Church, was always incest, "which is the crime," Bodin says, "of which the blaspheming sorcerers have been convicted from all antiquity, for Satan gives them to understand that there is no perfect sorcerer or enchanter who was not begotten by the father of the daughter, or by the mother of the son."

We find a circumstantial description of the sabbath, in the decree of the tribunal of Arras in 1460 against five women and a number of men accused of *vauderie* or of sorcery. Among the condemned were to be remarked a painter, a poet and an abbot, aged seventy years, who had been, very likely, the principal actor in these unheard-of debaucheries, marked with a remnant of the Vaudois heresy. 'When they wished to go to the *vauderie* (that is to say, to the sabbath), with an ointment which the Devil had provided them, they anointed a rod of wood, very small, and their palms (fingers), and their hands, then they placed this rod between their legs, and at once they flew where they desired to be, above good cities, woods and waters, and the Devil bore them to the place where they were to hold their assembly. And in this place they found, one and another, the tables set, laden with viands; and they found there a devil in the form of a goat, of a dog, of a monkey, and sometimes of a man, and they made oblations and homages to the said devil and adored him, by giving him, most of them their souls, and most or at least something of their bodies. Then they kissed the devil in the form of a goat, in the rear, that is to say, on the behind, with burning candles in their hands. . . . After they had all drunk well and eaten, they took carnal habitation all together, and even the devil took the form of man and of woman, and had cohabitation, the man with the devil in the form of woman, and the devil in the form of man with the women. And they even committed the sin of Sodom, of *bougrerie* and so many other crimes, so many very stinking and enormous ones, so many as well against God

as against nature, that the said inquisitor says he does not dare to name them, out of doubt that innocent ears may be advised of such villainous, enormous and cruel crimes." (*Mémoires* of Jacques Duclerq, Book IV, Chapter 4.)

Bodin, who believed firmly in carnal copulation with devils, and who speaks of it in a number of places in his *Démonomanie*, does not appear to be preoccupied with the unnatural disorders which the Devil committed with the sorcerers and especially with the sorceresses. He undoubtedly shared the opinion of those demonologists who would have it that the sin against nature was not so abhorrent to the devils as to men. One might, nevertheless, without offering any insult to the sons of Satan, presume that they were not any more reserved on this point at the sabbath than they were in Hell. An English monk of Evesham, who descended to Hell in the year 1196, under the conduct of St. Nicolas, relates thus the most extraordinary sights he saw: "There is there an abominable punishment, shameful and horrible beyond the others, to which are condemned those who in their mortal lives have been guilty of that crime which a Christian cannot name, of which the pagans themselves and the Gentiles stand in horror. These miserable wretches were assailed by enormous monsters, who appeared to be of fire, and whose hideous and frightful forms surpass all that the imagination might conceive. Despite their resistance and their vain efforts, they were constrained to suffer the abominable approaches of these demons. In the midst of these terrifying copulations, the unfortunate ones burst forth in groans. Sometimes they would fall, deprived of all feeling, and as though dead; but it was required of them to come back to life and be born anew for the punishment. Oh grief! the multitude of these infamous ones was as endless as their punishment. . . . In that horrible place, I did not recognize nor seek to recognize anyone, so great was the insurmountable disgust inspired in me by the enormity of the crime, the obscenity of the punishment and the stench which it exhaled." (*Grande Chronique* of Mathieu Paris, translated by A. Huillard-Breholles, Volume II, page 265.)

The sorcerers, then, made no scruple about imitating the manners of the Devil, who set thus an example of the most detestable vices, not only in Hell, but on the Earth. The sabbath was, in all times and in all countries, a school of sacrilege and of Prostitution. It was there that all the sorcerers and sorceresses assembled, says Antonio de Torquemada, in his *Hexameron*, "and a number of devils with them, in the form of gentlemen and beautiful women, and they mingled together *au rebours* and accomplished their disorderly and unclean desires." Things did not appear to be any different in other cases beside the sabbath, whenever Satan dealt with men. In the time of Guibert de Nogent, who relates this diabolic temptation, a monk suffering from a grave malady had received treatment at the hands of a Jewish physician who was very expert in the healing art; he conceived the fatal idea of looking on the Devil; the latter, summoned by the Jew, presented himself at the monk's pillow, and promised him health, riches and science in exchange for a sacrifice. "Eh! What sacrifice?" demanded the monk. . . . "The sacrifice of what is most delicious in man." . . . "And what is that?" And then the demon had the audacity to explain. "Oh crime! oh shame!" exclaimed Guibert de Nogent (*De Vita Sua*, Book I, Chapter 26), "and the one of whom this was demanded was a priest! . . . And the poor wretch did what was demanded of him. And it was by means of this horrible libation that he came to deny the Christian faith." The sorcerers, like their infernal patrons, had strange fantasies; they frequently deprived their sorry victims of the sexual parts, devoting these parts to the abominations of the sabbath. "They have not," says Bodin, "the power of taking away a single one of a man's members, except the virile parts, which is what they do in Germany, causing the shameful parts to retire and take hiding in the belly. And on this head, Spranger relates that a man, Aspire, thinking himself deprived of his virile parts, summoned physicians and surgeons, who were unable to find any wound of any sort; and afterwards, having appeased the sorceress whom he had offended, he was restored." This *attentat* of sorcery against virility was re-

peated very frequently under the name of "eagle's knot"* (*noeub de l'aiguillette*); and when the sorcerer did not practice magical castration upon the victim, he deprived him, so to speak, of the soul and power of his sex and appropriated them for himself. The demonologists have interpreted this fact by saying that the Devil accepted as a sacrifice the attributes and trophies of lust, whereas the sorcerers reserved the use of these for themselves, in order to accomplish the monstrous debaucheries of the sabbath.

Among these debauches must be included the crime of bestiality, which would have appeared to have been a very ordinary one in the nocturnal assemblages of the sorcerers. This execrable crime, so frequent among the ancient peoples, made its appearance but rarely in the modern tribunals, where it met invariably with the capital penalty: the guilty one was burned alive with his accomplice, whatever the rank of the latter in the scale of animate beings. But this very crime appeared to be inherent in that of sorcery, and the jurisprudence of the Middle Ages felt that any individual of either sex who had taken part in the sabbath, was, by that fact alone, to be suspected of bestiality. Bodin does not express himself upon this point except with a reserve which bears witness to the horror that such a subject inspired in him. "And when the Law of God," he says, citing the 22nd Chapter of *Exodus*, "forbids permitting the sorceress to live, it is said, immediately afterward, that *He who shall commit lechery with a brute beast shall be put to death*. Now the meaning of the Law of God touches covertly on incredible villainies and wickedness; as when it is said *You shall not present to God the wages of lechery nor the price of a dog!* This refers to the lechery of the wicked with dogs." Bodin had spoken elsewhere of this infamy, which he hesitated to look upon as a personal act of the Devil. "Sometimes," he said, "the bestial appetite of certain women conveys the impression of the presence of a devil, as it happened in the year 1566, in the diocese of Cologne. There was found in a monastery a dog who was said

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf. the Roman superstition regarding knots.

to be a demon, who lifted the robes of the religious to abuse them. This was not a demon, in my opinion, but a natural dog. There was found at Toulouse a woman who committed an abuse of this sort, and the dog, in the presence of all the world, attempted to force her. She confessed the truth and was burned."

And yet, Bodin had but to recall the description of the sabbath, where Satan effected the form of a dog, or a bull, or an ass, or a goat, in order to receive the sacrifices of his adorers. In such case, he might reproach himself with having too hastily cleared Satan's skirts at the expense of the human species. "It may be," he says, revising his statement somewhat, "that Satan is sent of God, even as it is certain that all punishment comes of Him, by ordinary means, or without means, in order to avenge such a villainy; as it happened at the monastery of Mont-de-Hesse, in Germany, where the religious were demoniacal; and there one might have seen upon their beds dogs immodestly awaiting those who were suspected of such abuse and of having committed that sin which they call the silent sin." (*Démonomanie des Sorciers*, Book III, chapter 6.) Bayle, in his *Responses aux Questions d'un Provincial*, appears to have been animated by a desire to explain and motivate all the conduct which was attributed to sorceresses, by proving that the majority of these sorceresses were old debauchees, who could no longer satisfy their imaginations and their depraved senses, except by a supernatural and diabolical commerce. "Such was, before the Deluge, the taste of the demons," he says, in Chapter LVII, "they would have only the beautiful; they became less delicate with time, until finally we see them at the other extremity: they will have nothing but the ugliness of old age. It is only with old women that they any longer marry, if it is permissible to make use of this word in connection with that carnal commerce which they have with the sorceresses, and which begins regularly after the first homage that they pay to the one who presides over the sabbath, and which is repeated thereafter every time they return to that assemblage, *non aliter haec sacra constant*, without counting the extraordinary occasions." (See Bodin, Chapters 4 and 7 of the second book

of his *Démonomanie*, and also Antonio de Torquemada.) One should not forget to remark that, in view of the form they took and the homage they demanded, the ugliest mouths would have been all to beautiful for them; *similes habent labia lactucas*, one adds, proverbially. (See Torquemada, *Jardin de Flores Curiosas*. Antwerp 1575, in-12, page 294)

All writers who have brought a critical and philosophic spirit to bear upon their examination of the arcanum of sorcery have not failed to remark the species of uterine fury which the devil superexcited, in old women rather than in young ones. The learned and grave professor, Thomas Erastus, admits, it is true, that sorceresses of all ages were to be met with; but he demonstrates doctorally that the majority of them were aged, for the reason that old age, in certain feminine natures, exalts the physical passions, in place of extinguishing them.* “Before being sorceresses,” he says, “these women were libidinous, and they become more and more so in their relations with the demons.” He compares them to old nanny goats who incessantly seek the caresses of the he-goat. *Hinc proverbio apud nostros factus est locus, vetulas capras libentius lingere sales juvenculis*. He adds that one should not be astonished at seeing women who have lost all fear of God and all modesty, giving themselves to those excesses which old age does not spare other women, women who are to be pitied rather than blamed: *Quis dubitet illas immodestius, majoreque ardore, ad impuritatem sine rationis fraeno aut infamiae metu, brutorum instar ferri?* (See the treatise of Th. Erastus, *De Lamiis*, pages 30 and 113.) The demons, those masters of impurity, as a certain mystic calls them, were but too inclined to give free rein to their unclean and bizarre imaginations; one could not remain in their company without there contracting the most deplorable habits. Sorcery was an academy of perdition, in which man and the Devil appeared to be engaged in a contest of incontinence and lubricity. The initiation consisted always of some horrible sin, in which Satan had

*“Change of life,” our “dangerous forties,” etc. Remember, also, Vil-
lon’s *La Belle Heaulmière* cited in a previous chapter.

his part. Thus, to cite but one fact among a thousand, the Sibyl of Norcia, so celebrated in the Middle Ages as the Queen of a school of magic, to which one went to be initiated at his own peril, received in a singular fashion the curious ones who came to visit her in her cavern. "The Sibyl and all those who inhabit her realm," says Bayle (*Responses aux Questions d'Un Provincial*, Chapter 58), "take each night the figure of a serpent, and it is necessary for all those who desire to enter the cavern to have an affair with one of these serpents. This is their debut, their initiation; it is thus one pays the entrance fee (see Leandro Alberti, *Descritt, di tutta Italia*, fol. 278): *La notte, tantoî mascoli quanto le femine, doventano, spaventose serpi, insieme con la sibilla, e che tutti quelli che desiderano entrarci, gli bisogna primieramente pigliare lascivi piaceri con le dette stomacose serpi.*"* There was a continual flood of pilgrims who came to seek adventure in this cavern. The Sibyl gave audience to all, and sometimes she would take the place of the serpents in order to make a fete for her guests. At such times, the beautiful fairies who formed her court would also change into serpents, into lizards, into scorpions and into crocodiles, so to mingle in a frightful witches' sabbath, where they were to be seen, according to the genial Blaise de Vignere, in his notes on the *Tableaux de Platte Peinture* of Philostratus, "demanding a very ugly and hideous service." Woe to the simple mortal who did not obey the orders of the Sybil, or who executed them badly! He fell a prey to the insatiable lubricity of the reptile, until he was delivered by the happy arrival of a hermit or a monk.

It is evident from all these facts, and from a multitude of other similar ones, that sorcery, which claimed fewer dupes than victims, always had Prostitution in view. Apart from a small number of credulous magicians and confirmed sorceresses, everyone who had been initiated served others or made others serve him in an abominable debauchery. The sabbath opened the door to all turpitudes, and sometimes it was like a hideous

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Serpent worship again. Cf. also the worms and dragons of Arthurian and Teutonic epic and legend.

company of libertines of both sexes; sometimes it assembled, for the profit of certain libidinous knaves, a troop of credulous and fascinated women. In such a case it was a means for the fulfillment of lust while in the other case it was merely the occasion. It may be concluded from the evidence of the accused in various sorcery trials, that all the benefits of the sabbath accrued to one individual, who debauched the young girl and who tried out upon the initiates the odious inventions of his own perversity. In a great number of circumstances, the role of the Devil was taken by some wicked wretch, who abused it in order to satisfy his own horrible caprices by demanding an obscene tribute from the miserable ones under his domination. In one of the last sorcery trials, in 1632, the curé Cordet, who was adjudged and condemned at Epinal, was accused of having introduced the ribaude Cathelinotte to the sabbath and of having presented her to the master Persin, a great black man, cold as ice, *etiam in coitu*, clad in red, seated upon a throne covered with black skins and pinching the cheeks of the neophytes in order to make them deny God and the Virgin. (*Archives d'Epinal*, cited by E. Bétin.)

In a trial of the same sort, which a few years before had been given an immense amount of publicity, it was learned that a curé of the parish of Accouls at Marseilles, named Louis Gaurfridi, had given himself to the Devil, on condition that he might inspire love in women and girls by breathing upon them. He had breathed upon the young Magdeleine, daughter of a Provençal gentleman named Madole de la Palud, when the girl was not yet nine years old. He afterwards breathed upon others of the sex who had nothing to refuse him. Magdeleine de la Palud continued, in spite of herself, to be the mistress of Gaurfridi, who had caused her to enter the religious order of St. Ursula. Finally, this seducer of innocence, pursued by the Inquisition, confessed his crime and declared that he had had a number of private sessions with Magdeleine in the church as well as in the house, by day as well as by night; that he had known her

carnally, and that he had imprinted upon her body various diabolic characters; that he had gone with her to the witches' sabbath, and that he had there committed, in her presence, an infinitude of scandalous, impious and abominable actions to the honor of Lucifer. Louis Gaufridi was burned alive at Aix, in the Place des Jacobins, after having made honorable amends, with his head and hands naked, the rope on his neck and a lighted torch in his hand.

One might cite a multitude of sorcery trials in which moral depravation is to be glimpsed covered with the mantle of diabolic possession, all its misdeeds being attributed to the tyranny of Hell; but it would not be difficult to recognize the fact that even those who pretended to have yielded to an occult and irresistible power, did not always believe in the intervention of demons. These were ordinarily shameful libertines, forced by circumstances to live a continent life, or at least to conceal under a respectable exterior, the effervescence of their sensual passions; they were priests, they were monks, who abandoned themselves in secret to the demon of the flesh. The sabbath was the rendez-vous of all that was most perverse; that is why it was held in isolated places, in the depths of woods, in the mountains, among rocks, and the place selected for these assemblages of nocturnal debauchery was always one that had had, from time immemorial, the same destination. It would appear to us then a demonstrated fact, that the sorcerers, at least a majority of them, only employed magic for the works of Prostitution, and that, if the sorceresses were frequently of good faith, though blinded and fascinated by their own imaginations, the devils who held regular relations with them, belonged all to the worst class of debauchees.

By this may be explained why it was that ecclesiastic and secular justice displayed so much rigor against the sorcerers and sorceresses; it had viewed in sorcery all the most execrable acts of human depravation, and when it condemned a sorcerer, it merely applied to him the penalties of incest, sodomy and bestiality, as though he were guilty of all these crimes. Sorcery, which was nothing else than debauchery, as we believe we have

proved, spread itself in so furious a manner throughout Europe in the sixteenth century that the famous Trois-échelles, who was condemned to the flames in 1571, and who obtained pardon on condition that he would denounce all his accomplices, told the King the number of sorcerers in France might be estimated at 300,000. "He found so great a number, rich and poor," says Bodin, "that some aided the others to escape, in such a manner that this vermin has always multiplied as a perpetual evidence of the impiety of the accused and a monument to the long suffering of the judges charged with hunting them down." This impunity had made of all France a vast arena of sorcery or of Prostitution. There were but 100,000 sorcerers in the realm during the reign of Francis I, according to the calculation of Père Crespet, in his treatise, *De la Haine de Satan*. Trois-échelles, who undoubtedly was well versed in statistics of this sort, revealed the fact that the number had tripled in less than half a century. Filesac, a doctor of the Sorbonne, and another demoniacal statistician, wrote in 1609, that the sorcerers were more numerous than the prostitutes. He cites, in support of this, two verses of Plautus, meaning that there are more women of joy and procurers than there are flies in summer:

*Nam nunc lenonum et scortorum plus est fere,
Quam olim muscarum est, cum caletur maxime.*

Trucul., Act I, sc. 1.

Then he adds, in his treatise, *De Idolatria Magica*: "*Etiam magos, maleficos, sagas, hoc tempore, in orbe christiano, longe numero superare omnes fornices, et prostibula, et officosos istos, qui homines inter se convenas facere solent, nemo negabit, nisi elleborosus existat, et nos quidem tantam colluviem mirabimur ac perhorrescimus.*" This denunciation did not by any means have the effect of causing the half of France to be judged by the Inquisition, but his opinion of the grave Filesac did lead the jurisconsults to see in sorcery merely a form of the most criminal

Prostitution, and one which they felt obliged to punish with all the severity of the laws, in order to suppress those disorders which were corrupting public manners, and which would have ended by destroying society in its very germ. It was the habit to attribute to the malice of the Devil a number of detestable acts, which reflected merely the depravation of men, and care was taken not to diminish the horror with which vulgar credulity surrounded the sabbath, for if things had been shown in their true light, the sabbath would have been still more frequented, curiosity being a dangerous motive to moral and physical depravation. The tribunals showed themselves impitiable towards sorcecers, but it is certain, that in general, they knew the Devil to be a stranger to those crimes of human and divine *lèse-majesté* which bebauchery was in the habit of attributing to sorcery. One might then, up to a certain point, justify the terrible legislation of the Middle Ages regarding sorcery, and it might be proved that society was forced to defend itself thus, by steel and by fire, against the invading gangrene of public Prostitution.

CHAPTER XXVII

WE HAVE already viewed, in the first centuries of the Christian era, sacred Prostitution as a survival of paganism reproducing and perpetuating itself in the form of heresy; we have seen heresies, founded upon the satisfaction of the senses, multiplying themselves to an infinite degree in the lap of the Church of Christ, and giving themselves effervescently to all the disorders of the physical passions. We have been able to understand how nascent Christianity, which appealed only to noble and generous impulses of the mind, had had to employ rigorous means in restraining and wiping out the sects which tended to corrupt manners and which threatened the future of the new society, by giving free rein to the blind and futile forces of matter. But the persecution of the councils, directed by the secular arm of the Greek and Latin Churches, had not succeeded in annihilating heresy, although they had caused the disappearance from the face of the Christian world of heresiarchs and the heretics; after bloody wars, after innumerable punishments and massacres, the principle of heresy remained a lively and persevering one, for this principle was none other than that of sacred Prostitution.

That is how heresy, in varying its form and changing its name, came to reappear incessantly throughout the Middle Ages; that is why Prostitution frequently endeavored to take refuge in heresy, as in a fortress where it might brave with audacity the morality of the Gospel and the austerity of Christian doctrines. There were, undoubtedly, in the different heretical sects, doctors and philosophers who took part in good faith in the metaphysical discussions, and who sought only the truth, with passion if not with discernment; but the vulgar, the false and perverse spirits, the weak or depraved imaginations, the ardent and vicious natures were drawn to the pursuit of material pleasures and

saw, in the practices of religion, only an excuse for a shameful sensualism. No better explanation can be given for the invincible stubbornness of heresy, which had constant recourse to the same seductions, and which everywhere obtained the same results.

From the twelfth century to our day, heresy has made numerous appearances in France, in which appearances we may recognize ordinarily the germs of Manicheism and the fruits of Prostitution. Bayle, in his *Dictionary*, takes up the question of Manicheism in order to demonstrate that this form of heresy was born quite naturally of the struggle between the passions in the life of man. "How can it be," he says, (article on GUARIN) "that the human race should be attracted toward evil by an almost irresistible force, I mean to say, by the sentiment of pleasure, or that it should be turned away from evil by fear of remorse or by that of infamy and many other pains? . . . Manicheism came apparently from prolonged meditation on this deplorable state of man."* Bayle reasoned like a philosopher, but the majority of the manicheans were not capable of reasoning in such a manner or of understanding the reason. They accepted, with eyes closed, a dogma and a cult which favored thus their sensuality and their libertinism; religion thus became for them a continual excitation to debauchery.

It is our plan here to indicate rapidly the presence of Prostitution in France in the form of heresy at nearly all periods. It must be remarked first of all that, in each heresy, from the end of the twelfth century, the sectaries held secret assemblages, by night rather than by day, in desert or enclosed places. These assemblages had, for object or pretext, the practice of a cult; in some cases, the two sexes were united; in others, they were separated; at other times, the men alone were admitted to these mysterious *cénacles*. Everything took place there in proper order, for nothing was done but to pray and adore in common;

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) But see Schopenhaur's *Studies in Pessimism* for an exposition of this necessity for evil. "Nobody will very readily regard a doctrine as true merely because it makes people happy and virtuous."—Neitzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*—39.

but in certain cases, abuses and disorders arose, inspired by the impurity of certain false apostles or neophytes, and public opinion soon laid hold of these scandalous rumors concerning the assemblages of the heretics. The latter were accused of putting out their lights at a given signal and of then yielding, in the darkness, to all the distractions of the flesh. Sometimes they were credited with the most shameful excesses of promiscuity; sometimes they were reproached with having outraged nature by the abominable practices of sodomy.

The Bulgarians, who did not become multiplied in France until the end of the twelfth century, had begun from the tenth century to spread over Europe and to settle in Bulgaria, where they possessed a sort of pope or Prester John, who was their spiritual head. The name of Bulgarians, belonging at that time to a nation, became the name of a sect and spread to all countries along with the heresy itself, which was nothing but the Manicheism of old. This name was soon corrupted in the French language which was spoken at this epoch; in place of *Bulgares*, one came to say *bougares* and *bouguères* (*bugari* and *bugeri* in the low Latin); from *bouguères* came *bougres*, and under this generic qualification were included all depraved men who conformed in their manners to the doctrine and example of the true Bulgarians. These latter regarded as a sacrilege the natural relations of the two sexes even in a state of marriage; they did not tolerate carnal intercourse between a married pair, except with a view of procreation of children; sometimes, even, they forgot this providential destiny of humanity and absolutely forbade the man all sexual relations with the woman. So monstrous a heresy against the law of nature could not fail to expose the Bulgarians to the gravest accusations, which they perhaps tended to confirm by their manner of life. However this may be, their heresy made frightful progress, especially in Languedoc, when Phillip-Augustus, according to a manuscript *Chronicle* cited by Ducange (under the word BULGARI), "sent his son into Albigeois to destroy the heresy of the *bougres* of the country." The same *Chronicle* adds under the year of 1225: "In that year the

bougres of Friar John, who were of the order of Preaching Friars, broke out."

As to the heresy itself, which lighted the pyres throughout all Europe, it cannot be stated positively whether or not it was guilty of the horrible defilements of which the popular voice accused it; but it is evident that this heresy, which the contemporary chroniclers describe as execrable (*omnium errorum faex extrema*, says the monk of Auxerre), had for synonym the word *bouguerie* or *bougrerie*, which alone justified the rigor of the legislative authorities toward the Bulgarians. Saint Louis, in his *Établissements*, did not hesitate, despite his well-known charity and clemency, to demand the death penalty against the heretics: "If anyone is suspected of *bouguerie*, justice shall take him and send him to the bishop, and if it is proved, he must burn." The Bulgarians, in order to escape the general reprobation which pursued them throughout France, were forced to change their name; they endeavored to mingle with the Albigeois, who repelled them with horror; they also endeavored to attach themselves to the Vaudois, who declined, however, to be branded with their infamous name. They were called, successively, *Paterins*, *Patares*, *Cathares*, *Joviniens*, etc., but under these different names, they were equally suspected of *bouguerie*, and they did not escape the pyre when they fell into the hands of the inquisitors. They might even be accused, on account of the horror which they inspired, of having provoked under the reign of Louis VIII, the Crusade against the Albigeois, with whom public opinion obstinately confused them.

One might find, with the aid of etymology, in the very names of these ignoble heretics, a proof of the turpitude which characterized their impure sect. The name of *bulgari* is derived from *bulga*, which signifies at once a leather saddle bag, a purse and the breeches of a man. Ménage and Leduchat did not stop at this single etymology, which still is sufficient to imply all that we blush to explain. The name of *Baterini* seems to have been formed by contraction from *Paterni* and *Paterniani*, heretics who were also Manicheans, and who, in the time of Saint Augustine,

held that the inferior parts of the body had been created not by God but by the Devil, and that the latter, as a consequence, made no scruple of making use of those parts for his own shameful purposes (*omnium ex illis partibus flagitiorum licentiam tribuentes impurissime vivunt* says Saint Augustine). From *Paterin* or *Patarin* had come *patalin* and *patelin*, which latter has remained in the language to express a fact that these heretics made use of obscene caresses (*palpando*) toward those proselytes whom they desired to seduce to evil. The name of *Cathari*, according to the learned Godefroi Henschenius, cited by Ducange, had for root a German word, *caters* which means a cat or an incubus, and this soubriquet applied to the Bulgarians bore allusion to their assemblages of debauchery (*propter nocturnas coitones*).*

All the sectaries, by a refinement of libertinism, imposed upon themselves privations of every sort and affected in general a complete detachment from material things; this, however, was but a mask of continence and self-abnegation, under which they felt more at ease than in giving themselves to their passions and in giving a free rein to nature. Their practices of austere devotion were a sort of ragoût to their secret debaucheries. It was always Prostitution which gave a glow to proselytism and which served as an occult bond to heresy. There is no other explanation for the favor accorded to each new metamorphosis of Manichæism, despite the perils of Catholic persecution. A number of sects born out of France, that of the Stadings in 1232, that of the Fratricelles in 1296, that of the Begghards (Beghards) or Beghins (Beguins) in 1312, and many others not less bizarre did not have so long and so tenacious an existence as the sect of Bulgarians, for the reason that they were not equally favorable to the evil instincts of man. When the rise of the sect of Flagellants was witnessed in 1259, there was no suspicion at first that the voluntary penances of these sinners who flagellated themselves in public might be an invention of lust. The new heretics, marched in

*(J. U. N's Note:) It is more probable, however, that the word was derived from the Low Latin Catharista, from Gr. Katharos, clean, pure, whence our Catharist (one who pretends to excessive purity) and our Catharsis and Cathartic, that which purges or makes clean.

procession, two by two, preceded by the cross and by banners; they were nude down to the girdle (*solis pudendis honeste velatis*) in the greatest cold of winter, and they lashed themselves or each other with whips and leather thongs, giving great groans all the while, and bursting into torrents of tears; they did not hesitate to cover themselves with blood, and only continued their mutual fustigation with all the more fury. This was not all: they betook themselves, by night, in the country, to the depths of woods and to isolated and ill-favored places; there, in the darkness or by the light of the torch, they redoubled their flagellations, their cries and their immodest insanities. It is easy to divine the odious consequences of these gatherings of half-clad men and women animated by the spectacle of so indecent a pantomime, in which each became an actor in his turn until he gradually reached the last paroxysm of libidinous ecstasy.

The casuists asserted that this individual or reciprocal fustigation resulted ordinarily in a physical superexcitation of the senses; but they pretended that the one who underwent it incurred all the more merit by overcoming nature and by preserving his chastity under the lively prickings of sin. Other casuists, on the contrary, insisted that the immediate effect of the flagellation was to repress the disorderly impulses of the flesh and to hold in check the demon lodged in the shameful parts. Behold in what terms the Abbé Boileau, in his *Histoire de Flagellans* has dared to translate this strange proposition: *Nec esse est cum musculi lumbarum virgis aut flagellis diverberantur, spiritus vitales revelli, adeoque solaces motus ob viciniam partium genitalium et testium excitari, qui venereis imaginibus ac illecebris cerebrum mentemque fascinant ac virtutem castitatis ad extremas angustias redigunt.* However this may be, it cannot be doubted that the Flagellants, who had borrowed from paganism the indecent ceremonial of the Lupercalia, found in these penances a spur to debauchery and a strange revival of sensuality. The custom of flagellation in antiquity was well known to all debauchees, who made use of its aid in preparing themselves for the pleasures of love, but in the Middle Ages, if erotic flagellation was practiced but rarely, and

was surrounded by a profound mystery, it had, on the other hand, taken on a sanguinarily ferocious character, which was evidenced in the acts of the Flagellants. Pic de la Mirandole, in his *Traité Contre les Astrologues* (Book III, Chap. 27) indicates clearly enough what the flagellation of the heretics must have been like, in describing the frightful pleasure experienced by a libertine (*prodigosae libidinis et inauditae*) who caused himself to be beaten with rods until the blood flowed from all parts of his body: *Ad Venerem numquam accendetur nisi vapulet. Et tamen scelus id ita cogitat; saevientes ita plagas desiderat, ut increpet verberantem, si cum eo lentius egerit, haud compos plene voti, nisi eruperit sanguis, et innocentes artus hominis nocentissimi violentior scutica desaevierit.* This infamous man arrived at pleasure through pain, and the sight of his own blood constituted the climax of his sensual frenzy.*

The sect of Flagellants, which came from Italy and which had rapidly propagated itself throughout all Europe, did no more than show its head in France in the course of the year 1259, for the ecclesiastical powers took it upon themselves to crush this heresy which was but a hideous spectacle of Prostitution; but a century later, the flagellants reappeared in France, principally in the provinces of the East and the North, and began once more their public penance by means of lashes equipped with iron points, singing songs all the while, and inciting one another not to fail. There was a communal penance in which men and women, their heads and faces veiled, their shoulders and loins nude, would exchange disciplinary blows. There was also the individual penance, in which each one received from the hand of the *général de la dévotion* a number of blows corresponding to the nature of the sin he had to expiate. The penitents all lay stretched on the ground, in various positions, according to the different kinds of sin: the perjurer raised three fingers in the air; the adulterer lay flat on his belly; the drunkard pre-

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf. the experiences of the Austrian, Masoch. It is to be noted that sadism and masochism are derived from the same neurotic condition. Cf. the laughter of the flayed soldier in my *Judith*.

tended to be drinking, the miser to be fleeing his gold; all exposed those parts of the body which were to be fustigated; this fustigation was distributed by the head of the confraternity with a vigorous arm, in a pro rata fashion, according to the sins represented by the mute pantomime of the Flagellants. The people came running in a throng to these scandalous spectacles, and admired with enthusiasm the constancy of these voluntary martyrs, who permitted themselves to be flogged as much as they flogged. In 1343, during the Great Black Plague, 800,000 Flagellants were to be found in France, among them gentlemen and noble dames, who were not less avid than the rest of public fustigation, and who abandoned their châteaux, their families and their castles to enroll in these bands of fanatics and libertines.

It would be hard to say how it was these latter came to disappear in so short a time before the horror and disgust of honest folk; but religious flagellation survived;* it was, from then on, concentrated in the convents and it no longer outraged the modest glances of passers-by. There was, however, one occasion when it dared to leave the monastic cells and to promenade brazenly through the streets of Paris; that was when King Henri III endeavoured to establish the order of Penitence, and himself took part in the processions of the *Battus*. This last attempt at public flagellation proves clearly enough how great a part libertinism played in such acts of simulated or incoherent devotion.

In the majority of heresies proceeding from Manicheism, the sectaries did not blush from nudities of the body; they regarded it even as an essential condition of that cult, more or less abominable, which they paid to God. The Adamites, who had never ceased to exist in the bosom of the Christian Church, where they avoided always any cause of scandal, did not demand this nudity except in their secret ceremony; but one of their adepts named Picard (this name may have been but the designation of his native country) was not content with a contemporary and accidental nudity; he desired that he and his disciples should be always

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) And still survives: in New Mexico for example.

nude. He called himself the son of God and announced that his father had sent him into the world, like the new Adam, to reestablish the law of nature. Now according to him, this law of nature consisted of two things: the nudity of all the parts of the body and a community of women. *Picards* was the name given to those who listened to this obscene prophet and who were willing to live according to his law. Relations between the sexes, however, did not take place without permission of the head of the sect.* As soon as one of the Picardians experienced a desire for one of his companions, he would lead her to the Master and formulate his request thus: "My spirit glows for this one (*in hanc spiritus meus conculcavit*)!" The Master would respond with the Biblical words: "Go, cross and multiply!" And this tells the whole story. The Picardians, who would have feared losing their original liberty by renouncing their cherished nudity, were obliged to seek a retreat outside of France, in order to escape the pursuits of the Inquisition. They took refuge in Bohemia, among the Hussites, who, wholly heretical as they themselves were, grew indignant at the infamy of those poor wretches and exterminated them to the last one, without even taking pity on the women, all of whom were pregnant, and who obstinately refused to clothe themselves in prison, where they went to child bed with a smile, singing horrible songs. (See the *Dict. Hist.* of Bayle, under the word PICARDS).

It might be imagined that Prostitution, in the form of heresy, could go no further; but in 1373, the Picardians were revived in France under the name of *Turlupins*. This name, the etymology of which has not been fixed in any certain manner, would appear to convey an allusion to the wandering and brutal life led by these new Adamites, who slept in woods like the wolves. Not only did they go naked like the Picardians, but they also, in the manner of the Cynics of ancient Greece, "did the works of the flesh in open day before all the world." These are the terms made use of by Bayle, who cites a curious passage from the discourse of Chan-

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf. the usages of our present day Doukhoboors of Canada and Russia.

cellor Gerson: "*Cynicorum phisilosophorum more omnia verenda publicitùs nudata gestabant, et in publice velut jumenta coïtu, instar canum in nuditate et exercitio membrorum pudendorum degentes.*" Their doctrine was almost that of the Begghards, who were condemned by the council of Ravenna in 1312; they taught that man is free to obey all the instincts of nature, and that perfection resides in a liberty without limits; they added that the preacher ought to be proud of everything he has received from the Creator. That was why they attached so great a price to their state of nudity. They were obliged, however, to cover themselves, doubtless on account of the cold; but they were careful not to conceal the attributes of sex, and they passed a law requiring that all those parts which they looked upon as divine be exposed to public view. The learned Genebrard states positively in his *Chronicle* that this detestable sect was to be recognized by this partial nudity which it everywhere affected: *Turelupini cynicorum sectam suscitantes, nuditate pudendorum et publico coïtu.**

These infamous ones had multiplied in Savoy and in Dauphine, but their principal organization was in Paris, and had, at its head, a woman named Jehanne Dabentonne, who was burned alive at Marché-aux Prouceaux, near the Porte Sainte-Honoré. The books and habits of the confraternity were burned at the same time, along with a number of the *prescheurs* of this superstitious religion, which had taken the name of Fraternity of the Poor. Charles V sent Jacques de More of the order of Saint Dominic into the midland provinces to extirpate this execrable heresy; and Jacques de More, who took the singular title of *inquisiteur des bougres de la province de France* (see the *Glossary* of Ducange, under the word TURELUPINI), showed no grace to the Turlepins, male or female, who might be seized in a flagrant act. There soon remained of this shameful fraternity nothing but the proverbial word *turlepin*, which is still employed in an unpleasantly joc-

*Cf. The anecdote of Diogenes' loves.

ular sense, probably as the souvenir of the eccentric preachings and the ridiculous costumes of the sect of Jehanne Dabentonne.

There were still other heresies in which the most criminal sort of Prostitution put on the cloak of religion. Thus the famous *Vauderie* of Arras, in the 15th century, was but an imitation of the Vaudois doctrine, which found in sorcery a pretext for nocturnal assemblages replete with abominable mysteries. We have related, in the preceding chapter, a part of these mysteries which resemble the ordinary ceremonial of the sabbath of the sorcerers. But there were other reunions of the Vaudois which had nothing to do with the Devil and which were conducted in no more decent fashion; this was, indeed, a vast association of debauchery, organized by an apostate priest, who preached the most filthy epicureanism, themselves setting the example. The vicar of the Inquisition in the diocese of Arras, seconded by the Conte d'Étampes, Governor of Artois, directed at first these prosecutions against the daughters of joy, who were the most dangerous apostles of *Vauderie*; but soon after, bourgeoisie, squires, knights, and personages of distinction whom the new heresy already had perverted, were included in these judiciary pursuits. The accused were subjected to torture; frightful revelations were wrung from this and a great number of them perished in the flames. This terrible persecution of the Vaudois of Arras lasted for more than thirty years and lighted thousands of pyres in Artois.

Vaudois, Anabaptists, Adamites, Manicheans were never entirely dead; they sprang anew from their cinders, so true is it, that libertinism has an irresistible fascination for certain perverse, weak or depraved natures. Various heresies, however, invented by Prostitution, were current in Europe without entering France, or at least without making much progress there; thus, the Anabaptists, who manned whole armies in Holland and in Germany, put in merely an isolated appearance in the States of the Most Christian King. And yet, they offered Prostitution a prodigious field, for not only did they teach that every woman is obliged

to lend herself to the concupiscence of all men, but also that every man is equally called upon to satisfy all women. It is Prateolus who affirms this fact in his *Elenchus Hereseon* (Book I, p. 27), and following are the terms in which he defines this incredible heresy: *Dicunt postremo quamlibet mulierem obligatam esse ad coeundum cu quolibet viro eam petente, et contra eodem vinculo adstringuntur virum ad tantundem reddendum cuilibet mulieri hoc ab illo petenti.* Bayle, who indulges in some rather lively bantering on the material of the impossibility of such a doctrine, thinks with reason that this was a fable invented by the adversaries of the Anabaptists, with the object of rendering them at once odious and ridiculous. "The community of women," he says, "does not equal the abomination of this doctrine; it does not take away the liberty of refusing them; it does not bind the conscience to every sort of acquiescence." It was a little too much to endeavor to establish the principle that marriage is contrary to the law of God, and that woman, in order to conform to that law, must belong, successively or simultaneously, to all those who desire her. The sex of the weaker, according to this detestible heresy, was to be abandoned to the brutal and depraved passions of the stronger sex. Prostitution found itself introduced in this manner into the religious code of these fanatics, who gave to the world the hideous spectacle of their strange irruptions, amid the most atrocious scenes of murder, incendiarism and pillage, so true is it that Prostitution is like a gliding path hidden under flowers and leading to the abyss.

The Anabaptists were but Manicheans in disguise, like the majority of these heretics who had endeavored to form a sect after the 12th century, and who were careful not to avow their common origin. There were, moreover, in all these heresies, good and bad, both pure and impure adherents, so that each might follow the impulse of his nature, according to whether he obeyed the law of spirit or of matter. We may then recognize, with Beausabre, the learned historian of Manicheism, the fact that the Manicheans had been frequently the victims of calumny. Must we, for example, believe the common report of their nocturnal assemblages

and the horrors which were there committed under cover of darkness? There are always similar accusations to be found in all ages, and it is not to be forgotten that the pagans attributed to the first Christians, those dissolute manners and sacrilegious practices, which the Christians were later to attribute to the heretics. We may, then, suppose that paganism and Christianity made use of the same arms against their adversaries, whom they dishonored and calumniated in the same fashion. In heresy, as in primitive Christianity, there were, certainly, ardent, exulted, and perverse natures who employed the cult to satisfy their senses, and who, by this procedure, justified the belief generally established among the people regarding those abominations to be found in these assemblages where the lights were extinguished.

The reformers themselves were not exempt from the beginning from those insulting suspicions which always attached to nocturnal gatherings of the two sexes. Since these assemblages were surrounded with a profound mystery in order to elude the curiosity and persecution of the Catholics, since they sought out the darkest nights and the most retired places, it came naturally to be supposed that the new sect had good reasons for hiding its ceremonies as well as its doctrine. The people were only too ready to spread these unworthy and lying rumors and to put faith in them. "I have heard tell," says Brantôme, in his *Dames Galantes*. "(I do not know if it is true, neither would I affirm it), that in the beginning the Huguenots founded their religion and did their preachings by night and in secret, from fear of being surprised, sought out and punished, even as they were one day in the rue Saint Jacques at Paris, in the time of King Henri II, where certain great dames that I know, going there to receive this charity, were surprised. After the minister had done his preaching, he ended by recommending them to charity; and immediately afterward, their candles were put out, and thereupon each and everyone, male and female, did works with his brother and sister in Christ, according to the will and power of each: a fact which I cannot rightly assure, though I have been assured that it is true, though it is possible it is a pure lie and imposture." And yet,

despite the assertions of the Catholic Abbot of Brantôme, who goes on to relate the adventures of the beautiful Grotterelle at the meeting house of Poitiers (See *Dames Galantes*, Disc. I), it is practically certain that the innovators of the 16th century in France never gave rise to those scandals which the Anabaptists and the Adamites of the Low Country never failed to inflict on public modesty. Thus, in the history of religious innovations in our country, one would find no fact to set over against that indecent assemblage which was held at Amsterdam on the 13th of February, 1535, in which seven men and five women, yielding to the excitations and the example of an Anabaptist prophet, despoiled themselves of all their vestments, hurled the latter into the fire and ran out through the streets in a state of complete nudity. (See the *Rel. des Tumultes des Anabapt*, by Laur. Hortensius.) We must come down to the Convulsionists* of the 18th century in order to meet in France with anything analogous to this blind religious Prostitution.

This persistence of Prostitution in the form of heresy, in all times as in all countries, proves clearly enough the excellence of evangelic morality, which alone possesses the power to combat the gross appetite of sensuality. Heresy begins when the Christian, incessantly assailed and tormented by the demon of the flesh, has broken the bonds of continence, and abandons himself to those funereal instincts which impel him to vice. If the disciples of Luther and of Calvin called the Court of Rome the *Great Prostitute*, it was for the reason that the Roman Church, at the period when the reformers appeared, had entirely forgotten the precepts of Jesus Christ. Heresy this time was purified by the Gospel, whereas the Holy Seat became, so to speak, the shameful sanctuary of Prostitution.† This was the heresy which caused Catholicism to blush for the depravation of its ministers and the corruption of its children; this was the heresy which had the glory of restoring chastity of manners in the religion of Jesus Christ.

*Cf., our "Holy-rollers," etc.

†Cf., the *Apocalypse* of St. John.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WE have gone for the sources of this History to the works of poets, the majority of whom led a vagabond and libertine life; we have pointed out the fact that these works were faithful mirrors of the bad manners of the ages in which they were composed. It is no longer, however, among the poets that we shall seek the traces of public depravation at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries; it is in the sermons of the contemporary preachers that we shall find new colors, truer and bolder, for completing this strange picture of a wide-spread corruption, which bears witness to the impotence of human and divine laws against the demon of sensuality. Dulare, who, in his *Histoire de Paris*, has also made use of the old sermons in painting the moral state of society at the same epoch, does not exaggerate things when he pictures Prostitution as the triumphant Queen of the 15th century; but he is wrong in saying that it "was but one of the least effects of the vices of government." Government had nothing to do with the matter. "Prostitution authorized by the kings," cries the impitiable Dulare, "was still favored by the great number of celibates, priests and monks, by the debauchery of magistrates, of the army, etc." Dulare does not sustain the thesis to be found in the *Apologie pour Hérodote*, in which Henri Estienne endeavors to prove that everything goes from bad to worse here below, "For," he says, "whatever corruption there may be, it is very likely that it is small by comparison of that which is to follow, in view of the fact that it always mounts as though by degrees."*

The sermonists, and especially those who preached in a naïve or primitive style in order to make themselves more readily understood by the vulgar, present us with incontestable proofs of the

*Cf., the Marxian theory of society.

perversity of their century, and one might, without fear of deception, accept as true the majority of the facts which they relate in their discourses. Olivier Maillard, Michel Menot, Jean Clérée, Guillaume Pepin and a number of other famous preachers who did not pride themselves on rhetoric in the pulpit, exerted a more authoritative influence over their audiences, composed of the common people, when they spoke with eloquence of the heart, of good sense and decency, and when they frankly painted the vices and turpitudes which they desired to flay. They were undoubtedly gross and frequently brazen in their expressions, as in the examples they chose, but in striking hard, they struck none the less justly, and they certainly achieved very respectable results by means which were not always any too respectable. We may be assured that these sermons, which appear to us today ridiculous and scandalous, produced then a multitude of real conversions, and that the preacher, in descending from the pulpit, would see the confessionals filled with repentant sinners. There has been much amusement in our day at the expense of these old preachers, who indulged in such bizarre oratorical methods, and who related a hoard of cock-and-bull stories with eccentric buffooneries, accompanied by the most incredible pantomime; but account has not always been taken of the sort of public who came to listen to the word, little enough edifying for us, of these *preaching* monks.

This public, among which the feminine sex was undoubtedly in the majority, was not noted for the decency of its manners or for the purity of its intentions. It was composed of women and girls, indecently clad, engaged in what was called "hunting with the eyes" (*la chasse au regard*), flirting with men, giving rendezvous and keeping their appointments often without leaving the church, seeking adventure and making contracts of gallantry, or *ventes d'amours*. "He who would lead his horse to the church to sell it," says the author of a manuscript Latin poem entitled *Matheolus Bigamus*, "would commit a very unseemly action, but those women who, under pretext of religion, come to the church to sell themselves, are they not still more blameworthy? Do they not convert the house of the Lord into a market of Prostitution?" The

same poet goes on to enumerate all the churches and chapels of Paris where this fair of Prostitution was held, and which, by this fact, he says, with a candid impudence:

*Font à nos dames grand soulas!**

We have seen that Paris had, in the 15th century, "five or six thousand beautiful girls" (*cinq ou six mille belles filles*) devoted to legal Prostitution; it is a contemporary writer who fixes the figure for us. An Italian poet, Antonio Astezani, who travelled in France about this time, wrote in one of his letters, dated from Paris: "I have seen with admiration an unbelievable number of beautiful girls; their manners were so gracious, so lascivious, that they would have inflamed Nestor the sage and the old Priam himself." (See *Jeanne d'Arc*, by Berryat Saint-Prix, p. 311.) We have already reported, from the *Journal du Bourgeois de Paris*, that the provost of that city, Ambroise de Loré, had permitted the number of light women to increase beyond measure, despite the ordinances, to such a degree as to leave the author of the *Journal* to exclaim with indignation: "There are altogether too many of them at Paris!" Finally, there is no doubt in our mind, as we have already let it be understood elsewhere, that these light women, who were constantly arrested for violation of the law, at the doors of churches, with their rosaries, their *agnus-Dei* and their prayer books adorned with gold and silver, were not the most assiduous supporters of the preachers, whom they went to hear in order to indulge in amours (*faire des amoureux*)† Clément Marot, who gives us a picture of the scene in his *Dialogue de Deux Amoureux*, avows that he met with his beauty at the church; this beauty was probably the laundry woman of the Palace (*lingère du Palais*), with whom he was greatly taken before she bequeathed to him certain unforgettable souvenirs. His

*Give to our ladies great solace.

†(J. U. N.'s Note:) Balzac's Conte *La Connestable*.

friend asks him where it was he became so suddenly amorous. "In a church!", replies the poet, sighing,

Là commencay mes passions!‡

The other bursts out laughing and cries gayly:

Voilà de nos dévotions!§

There have been many long dissertations with the object of determining whether the preacher, who addressed this gallant assemblage, did so in French or in Latin. Some insist that the sermons, preached in the vulgar tongue, had been put into Latin before being printed; others, on the contrary, have thought that, since the advocates pleaded in Latin, the preachers could not have made use of the popular language. The question, although treated with much erudition on one side as much as the other, has remained in the air; and this is not the place to seek the answer. We shall remark merely that Olivier Maillard, having preached at Brussels in French, it would be hard to believe that he had preached in Latin at Paris, at Tours and at Poitiers. It is probable that his sermons, recorded by means of stenography at the time they were delivered, were translated into macaronic Latin, like those of the Italian Guillaume Barletta, or Barlète, who preached at Venice in his own language, but his sermons have only been published in Latin. Now this macaronic Latin was marvelously suited to the free burlesques of these popular preachers.

Olivier Maillard, whose reputation was made in the time of Louis IX, preached ordinarily at Saint Jean en Grève, and it may be supposed that the disrespectful population in the neighboring streets came in a throng to his sermon, which had for subject, the lust and debauchery of his times (*hujus temporis*, was his apropos remark). He called people and things by their names; he did not employ circumlocutions except for the object of adding one stroke

‡There began my passion!

§Behold, then, our devotions!

more to his gross picture; he does not appear to have any thought of the sanctity of the place where he pronounces his invectives against the agents and acts of Prostitution; he even affects to borrow his expressions from the vocabulary of that vice which he flagellates, but nevertheless, one could never accuse him, despite this license of terms and images, of an immorality which is not in his thought. It must be remembered also that in those days obscenity of language was not the result of an obscene life, and that, in treating of the gravest, most serious and most worthy subjects, the employment of a free word or an indecent figure of speech did not appear as an outrage to chaste ears and honest hearts.

In order to appreciate properly the nature of Parisian Prostitution at the end of the 15th century, it is sufficient to extract from the sermons of Olivier Maillard and Michel Menot what they have to say about the bad houses, prostitutes, and the procurers of one sex or the other; it is sufficient to listen to the debauches and infamies of all sorts with which they reproached their contemporaries. We shall, by preference, make use, in our quotations, of the eloquent and colorful style of Henri Estienne, who has translated a great number of these same extracts in his *Introduction au Traité de la Conformité des Merveilles Anciennes avec les Modernes, ou Traité Préparatif à l'Apologie par Hérodote*. Henri Estienne, good reformer that he was, took a malign pleasure in holding Catholicism responsible for the incongruous and indecent liberties of the Catholic capitol, without reflecting that Luther and Calvin, in their sermons and in their writings, had displayed an equal lack of reserve in describing the excesses of the Great Roman Prostitute.

Let us commence with the places of debauchery. "There are prostitutes in all the streets of Paris," says Maillard; *Hodie quis vicus non abundet meretricibus?* (*Quadrages.*, S. 23.) He complains of the bourgeoisie of the city, "who rent their houses to whores, pimps and procuresses (*putains, maquereaux et maquarelles*). Item, that whereas King Saint Louis had caused to be built a house for whores outside the city, the bordeaux were then

in all corners of the city.” He addresses the magistrates to summon them to execute the ordinance of Saint Louis: *Ego facio appellationem, nisi deposueritis ribalda et meretrices a locis secretis. Habetis lupanar fere in omnibus locis civitatis.* “Where are the ordinances of King Saint Louis?” he cries. “He had ordained that the bordeaux should not be near the colleges, in such fashion that the first thing the scholars would meet with upon leaving the college would be the bordeau!” He also reproved proprietors of houses who were only concerned with getting a good rent; and yet, he confesses that, if the ribaudes had been chased out of the great cities, debauchery was all the more rampant in those cities: *O maquerellae et meretrices! Et vos, burgenses, qui locatis domos ad tenendum lupanaria, ad exercendum suas immunditias et ut lenones vadant, vultis vivere de posterioribus meretricum?*

If there had been none but stationary and duly labeled *bordeaux!* But debauchery was everywhere, and not a house was exempt from it. It is Menot who tells us this with energy: “*Nunc aetas juvenum est ita dedita luxuriae, quod non est nec pratum, nec vinea, nec domus, quae non sordibus eorum inficiatur.*” Menot adds that nothing but daughters of joy were to be seen, in the city as well as in the suburbs: “*In suburbiis et per totam villam non videtur alia mercatura.* This merchandise was adapted to all ages and to all social conditions; the old as well as the young, married women as well as maidens, servant maids as well as their mistresses, indulged in what the preacher called a “traffic of their bodies” (*lucrum corporis*). *In cameris exercetur luxuria, in senibus, juvenibus, viduis, uxoratis, filiabus, ancillis, in tabernis et consequenter in omni statu.* The taverns and the hostelries, were then, as in all ages, dens of Prostitution. Michel Menot makes one of his newly married young people say: “You know that we cannot always have our wives near us, that we cannot wear them suspended from our girdles, or rather on our sleeves, and yet we young folk cannot do without women. And so, we come to the taverns, the hostelries, the sweating-rooms and other good places; and there we find chambermaids built for the

trade, and who are yet not worth much in silver; I should like to know if there is any harm in using such a one as your wife?" The public sweating-rooms served also as meeting places for lovers; Maillard frequently speaks of them, and in his sermon, *De Peccati Stipendio*, he addresses his audience thus: "Mesdames," he says to his lady parishioners, "do not go to the sweating-rooms (*stuphis*), and do not do there you know what!"* The churches, which Prostitution, as we have said, did not respect any more than it did the taverns and the sweating-rooms, became themselves, at need, annexes to the bad houses. "If the pillars of the churches had eyes," cries Maillard, redoubling his hem! hem! sermons, "and if they saw what took place there, if they had ears to hear and if they could speak, what would they say? I do not know; you priestly gentlemen, what have you to say?" (*Quadragesim*, Sermon 11.) We find, as a matter of fact, in all the ancient manuals of penance, a special designation for the sin of lust committed in a church, either during the offices or after the ceremonies, a number of degrees of this sin being indicated with corresponding penances. Maillard is astonished that the saints, who have their relics or their tombs in the churches where such abominations are committed, do not rise from their reliquaries and their sepulchres to snatch out the eyes of the lecheresses and their ribauds.

Maillard and the other preachers of the time give us few details concerning the professional ribaudes, although they deal with vile prostitutes (*viles meretrices*), they appear to pity the latter. "Oh poor sinful daughters!" cries the good Maillard, in his Sermon 14 (*Quadragesim*.), "Oh worldly women, who live with dogs (*mulieres mundanae, sociae canum!*) do not harden your hearts, but be instantly converted!" Elsewhere, he beseeches them again to return to God, as well as their pupils in debauchery; he adjures them not to lose their souls in the delights of the world: "*O peccatrices mulieres, et, vos, scolares cujuscumque conditionis, hor-tor vos in Domino Jesu quod propter delectationes mundi non*

* (J. U. N.'s Note:) Compare the previous description of the public baths at Rome.

perdatis animas vestras! In another sermon, he summons them, these miserable daughters of the Devil (*vos, miserales filiae diaboli*), to be converted; he appeals at the same time to the courtezans who hide their shameful profession and who practice it secretly (*vos, secretae meretrices, quae facitis pejora publica*). (Sermon 48.) It is to be seen that he experiences a sentiment of charitable compassion toward these unfortunate victims of Prostitution.

As to the agents of this Prostitution, he is pitiless in denouncing them to the hatred and contempt of honest folk, and in invoking against these infamous ones, all the rigor of the laws. "Are you here, gentlemen of justice?" he says one day. "What punishment do you provide for the maquereaux and the ruffians of this city?" Another time, he addresses himself again to the magistrates, inviting them to punish excitations to debauchery: "I appeal to you, gentlemen of justice, you who provide no punishment for such persons!" he says, assailing those lost women, who, after having made a traffic of themselves in the bad houses, traffic in others whom they corrupt and sell, as it were, on the auction block. "If there is in this city," continues Oliver Maillard, rising to a true climax of eloquence, "if there is anyone who has stolen ten sols, he shall have the lash for the first time; if he returns, he shall have the second time his ears cut off or his body mutilated in some other manner (for it is said: *Esset mutilatus in corpore*); if he robs for the third time, he shall be sent to the gallows; and now, tell me, gentlemen of justice, which is worse, to steal a hundred crowns or to steal a young girl?" (*Quadrages.*, Sermon 21.) This passage confirms what we have already said about the former trade of the vicious courtières. "*Nonne tales invenietis in illa civitate, quae in juventute, incipiunt lupanaria et semper continuant, et postmodum efficiuntur maquereellae?*" Olivier Maillard pursues with an edifying zeal all those degraded beings who are the go-betweens of Prostitution, and who live at its expense; he loads them with insults; he signals them out for public aversion; he seeks them out with his eye and designates them with his gesture in the midst of his groaning audience: "*Dicatis, vos,*

mulieres, posuistis filias ad peccandum; vos, mulieres, per vestros tactus impudicos provocastis alios ad peccandum? et, vos, maquerellae quid dicitis? (Sermon 37.)” Those whom the furious friar addressed in this manner, would drop their heads, blushing, and seek to escape the penance of being unmasked in public.

He continues his assault on these impure old women; he would have them flayed alive: *Estis hic antiquae macquerellae: si essetis scoriatie, non essetis satis punitae!* (Sermon 41.)* He pictures them as inspired by the Devil, and he does not conceal the fact that they are nearly as numerous at Paris as the poor girls whom they lead to sin: *Hoc tangit etiam diabolicas mulieres provocantes alias ad maleficiendum. Habetis in ista civitate multas mulieres quae provocant sorores suas ad immunditiam suam.* (Sermon 39.) But among all these vile creatures, those whom he detests the most, those he devotes to the flames of Hell, are the mothers who themselves labor at the Prostitution of their daughters, under pretense of enabling them to gain a dowry: “*Suntne hic matres illae maquerellae filiarum suarum, quae dederunt eas hominibus de Curia ad lucrandum matrimonium suum?* (Sermon 1.)” He looks about him, as though to discover in the congregation one of these unnatural mothers; every one is greatly moved and expects something to happen. “We have,” continues the preacher, “we have a number of mothers who sell their daughters and who play the part of maquerelles by forcing their daughters to gain their doweries by the sweat of their bodies! (*Et faciunt eis lucrari matrimonium suum ad poenam et sudorem sui corporis.*)” This form of Prostitution, the most hideous of all, must have been very frequent at that time, since the preachers are tireless in branding it with their anathemas. Lenot denounces it in almost the same terms as Maillard: “The mothers,” he says, “condemn their daughters by the bad examples they set them, by the taste for luxury and adornments which they inspire in them and by the too great liberty which they permit them. And what

*(J. U. N.’s Note:) Cf., the precepts of Jeshua (or Joshua) ben Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth.

is far worse, and I cannot say this without shedding tears, they sell their own daughters to the purveyors of debauchery! (*Et quod plus est, quad et flens dico, numquid non sunt quae proprias filias venundant lenonibus?*)” The preachers are all in agreement on this horrible exploitation of marriageable daughters under the eyes and at the instigation of their parents. Maillard does not hesitate to say to mothers of families: “Mothers, you give your daughters open robes and other indecent vestments in order to help them gain their dowry!” And to the fathers of families: “And you, good bourgeois, are you not prostituting your daughters when you give them fine clothes and permit them to rouge themselves like idols!”*

Everything which had to do, directly or remotely, with the trade of Prostitution complained loudly of the censures, frequently personal, which the preacher addressed to them from his pulpit. This, Maillard, after having branded with a red-hot iron the procuress-mothers, turns to the ladies who are whispering among themselves: “*Mesdames les bourgeoises*,” he says to them, “are you not of the number of those who cause their daughters to gain their dowries by the sweat of their bodies (*ad sudorem corporis sui*)?” The light women besought him not so speak of them any more, but to confine his attacks for example, to the barbers and the apothecaries. “I have told you,” replied the indomitable Maillard, “that such a demoiselle is a courtière of debauchery; but there are many others who are not known, but whom I shall denounce just the same (*Dixi vobis quae domicella quaedam est maquerella, et sunt multae secretae de quibus etiam loquar.*”—Sermon 41.) The sermons of the terrible Jacobin produced such an effect in the world of debauchery that the public women would say to their lovers: “So you have been to hear the preacher? I can see now that you are going to become a Carthusian and that you do not care for women any more!” (*Quadrages.*, Sermon 39.)

*Cf., the diatribes, in press, pulpit and elsewhere, against the parents of the modern flapper.

These sermons show us that at this period the procurers of the masculine sex were not less dangerous than those degraded women who practiced this vile trade. The preacher incessantly attacks those lenons and maqueraux (*lenones et maquerelli*) whom the rich, members of Parliament, abbots and canons were in the habit of employing in their illicit loves. It is evident from a number of passages that the Prostitutes had pimps and purveyors who went through the city seeking customers for them: *Et, vos, meretrices*, he says in his 43d quadragesimal sermon, *quando lenones vestri querunt quod juvetis ac diligatis eos magis quam alios*. He calls them elsewhere procurers (*procuratores*). He does not cast upon these all the burden of the sin which they provoke, for we find him blaming a penitent who endeavors to excuse himself for having committed a fault by attributing it to one of these miserable vendors of human flesh: *Ille enim qui habuit unam juvenulam per medium alicujus maquerelli, non debet se excusare super eum, sicut nec illa quae dixit quod fuit tentata; itaque tentator compulit eam facere quod voluit, sicut aliquis ribaldus vel leno*. (Sermon 37.) He invites these lenons, who throng at the foot of the cross of Christ, to repent and thus escape eternal damnation: *Audite, o pauperes peccatores, blasphematores, usurarii et lenones, et vos etiam, viles meretrices, timetisne damnari?* (Sermon 1.) Michel Menot, who frequently refers to these ignoble intermediaries of debauchery in his sermons, does not invite them to repentance, as though he were convinced that they are too far gone in sin; he abandons them pitilessly to the torments of Hell. Following is the manner in which he treats them in his macaronic jargon: "*Est una maquerella quae posuit multas puellas to the trade; ad malum ibit, she shall go from there, the big strumpet, ad omnes diabolos, estne totum?* No, she shall not have so good a bargain, *non habebit tam bonum forum, sed omnes quas incitavit ad malum servient ei* with fagots and brushwood to warm her thirty ribs!" (Serm. quadrages., 2.)

Olivier Maillard, in a sermon delivered at Saint Jean en Grève on the Monday before the first Sunday of Advent, gives us a curi-

ous picture of the role played by the lenons in amorous affairs. He tells how one of these agents of Prostitution (*aliquis maquere-llus*) is charged by a President of the Court with a handsome ring which he is to bear to certain women of pleasure; there are five whom the messenger is to see one after another; the first is a Picardian the second a Portevine; the third a Tourangelle; the fourth a Lyonnaise; and the fifth a Parisienne. He betakes himself to the first and knocks at her door, saying: *Trac, trac, trac*. The servant maid comes and demands: "Who is there?"—"Open," says the messenger, "and tell the madame that I am the servant of such and such a lord and that I would speak with her." The chambermaid returns to her mistress, who does not care to give audience to this messenger, and who sends word to him to leave. "That woman is good!" cries the preacher. The courtier of love then goes to knock at the door of the Poitevine; the servant opens and he is admitted to the presence of the lady who replies to him: "Say to your master that I am not what he takes me for (*Dicatis magistro vestro quod non sum talis seu de illis*)." "This second woman is also good!" says the preacher, but not so good as the first one!" The messenger goes to the third; he enters and shows her the ring. "Certainly," says this woman, "your ring is very beautiful and it pleases me very much."—"It is yours, if you want it," replies the man.—"I do not want it," she replies, "for I am afraid my husband might find it out." "That woman is bad!" cries the preacher, "for she consents in intent, although the fear of scandal prevents her from committing the act." The procurer is still better received by the fourth, who says to him: "The ring is beautiful, but I have a very jealous man. If he knew what you are asking of me he would break my head; and so I cannot do what M. le President desires." "This woman is worthless," adds the preacher, "because it is not the fear of God, but the fear of her husband which restrains her." The messenger then comes to the fifth, who was born at Paris and educated there. She keeps the ring and says to the servant: "Advise your master that on Wednesday my husband will be away from home, and that on that day I shall come to pay a visit to M.

le President." "This woman," says Olivier Maillard, "this woman is worse than all the others!"

It is above all against the incontinence of the priests and the religious that the preachers thunder, and it is to be understood that, in showing no grace to the impurities and the scandals of the secular and regular clergy, they were but conforming to the general opinion. The conduct of many ecclesiastics at this period must have been so shameful and so depraved that to wink at it would have been to approve it. Olivier Maillard is inflexible regarding those members of the clergy who have concubines *à pain et à pot* or who haunt women of evil life. He does not hesitate to say that a bishop or an abbot, in frequenting a bad house, dishonors the persons who dwell in that house. He speaks constantly of "concubine priests" or "fornicating priests" (*sacerdotes concubinariï* or *fornicariï*). He attacks then women who abandon themselves to monks and to curés. (*vos. mulieres, quae datis corpus vestrum curialibus, monachis, presbyteris*. Sermon 36). He curses those who keep girls and still celebrate the mass (*ecclesiasticis tenentibus meretrices publicas et celebrantibus*. Sermon 20); those who make presents to their prostitutes (*certe credo quod libenter enim dant meretricibus*. Sermon 57); those who give chains of gold and trailing robes to their penitents which the latter earn in the sweat of their bodies (Sermon 39.); those who make of their clerks vile agents of Prostitution; those who, at their banquets, indulge in obscene remarks; those who concern themselves with the dowries of marriageable girls; those, finally, who commit a thousand abominations.

Michel Menot is not less explicit regarding the disorders of other ecclesiastics. He forbids the giving of the eucharist to the servant maids of priests who are no more than the latters' concubines. He shows these girls seduced by the priests, who put them under lock and key (*est filia seducta quae fruit per annum reclusa cum sacerdote cum poto et cochleari*, or in French, *à pot et à cuiller*). "He also says in some places," reports Henri Estienne, "that when the gendarmes enter the villages, the first thing they seek out is the whore (*putain*) of the curé or the vicar;

but that with regard to prelates (from what one may judge from the utterances of this preacher), it would be well to sound a warning from one end of the city to the other: 'Guard well your front parts, madame or mademoiselle!' for, besides those whom they keep in their houses, they have their agents (*chalandes*) in all parts of the city, but they take a particular pleasure in making cuckolds of their parishioners. And the odd thing is that it is always necessary for the great houses to have a prelate for godfather; so that it frequently happens that the husband takes for godfather the one who is in reality the father, without knowing anything about it." The preachers speak with more reserve of the dissolute manners of certain convents of women; but they say enough to enable us to divine that Prostitution was sometimes hidden there. "Theodoric of Niem," says Dulaure, in his *Histoire de Paris*, "informs us that the convents of the religious were species of seraglios for the use of the bishops and the monks; that the result of this was many children who were reared as monks; that some religious committed abortions, while others slew their infants, etc." (*Nemoris Unionis Tractatus*, VI., Chapter 34.) Olivier Maillard had reason to exclaim: "May we have ears good enough to hear the voices of little children cast into the latrines or into the rivers!"

The demoralization must have been very great, since Maillard did not dare to express himself openly regarding the incests and the other "sins of lechery" (*péchés de paillardise*) with which he reproaches his epoch: *Taceo de adulteriis, stupris et incestibus et peccatis contra naturam*. Gabriel Barletta, who was in a manner but the echo in Italy of Maillard and Menot in France, is less reserved on this point, since he is speaking to Italians: "Oh, how many sodomites, oh, how many ribalds!" (*O quot sodomitae o quot ribaldi!*) cried Barletta, who did not hesitate to become technical on this frightful subject: *Hoc impedimento impedit diabolus linguam sodomitae, qui cum pueris rem turpem agit, O naturae destructor! impeditur ille qui cum uxore non agit per rectam lineam; impeditur qui cum bestiis rem agit per rectam lineam; impeditur qui cum bestiis rem agit turpem*. Barletta

must have found a certain pleasure in the thing,* since he plays upon the word *carnalitates*, from which he coins *cardinalitates*, by allusion to the cardinals, whom he especially accuses of these turpitudes. Maillard endeavors also to correct the errors of the flesh, *ad domandum carnis vitia*; but he does not attack in detail these sins of lust; he merely reproaches the ribalds with living like swine (*vos. meretrices et paillardi, quivivitis sicut porci*. Sermon 57). He is ashamed of his century, and sometimes he turns away his eyes with disgust, crying: "O my God, I do not believe that, since the incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, lust has ever before reigned in the world as it now reigns at Paris!"

One might with certitude say that the progress of Prostitution was the immediate result of luxury, of coquetry and vanity. The women were an incitation to vice, and there was soon a general traffic in debauchery to pay for the expenses of the toilet and the fantasies of fashion: "You will say, perhaps, mesdames," cried Menot, pointing a finger at them, "you will say: 'our husbands do not give us such robes, but we gain them in the sweat of our bodies!' To a thousand devils with such pain!" The history of manners shows us that from all times there has existed a proportional and relative relation between luxury and Prostitution. "Lust and luxury are brother and sister," said the little father André, in one of his joyous sermons.†

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Moral Sadism again combined with moral Masochism. Our modern word for this sort of perversion is Puritanism.

†Few of us know, perhaps, what jolly reading the old sermons make—for example, those of our own Jonathan Edwards.



CHAPTER XXIX

THE court of France had formerly been, according to an old expression, "The sign of the people's manners;" it was the court which served as a model for evil, as well as for good. It was it which, by its example, corrupted or purified public morality. The commonalty (*commun*), which was the term then given to everything outside the nobility, had its eyes fixed always on the conduct of the great and held it a point of honor to imitate the latter in all things, in order to be as like as possible to the privileged caste. Prostitution had no sooner made its appearance in the court than it was to be seen displaying itself brazenly in the city. This is why the most dissolute epochs were always those in which the license and depravation of the court exerted the sorriest influence over the manners of the country.

We can understand what rigorous watch the sovereign always had to maintain over the decency and the chastity of his household, for he in a manner was responsible for those scandals which had so unfortunate a result, since the citizens seemed bent on copying those vices of which they were the witnesses. Sometimes, it is true, calumny, always ardently prompt to spread its venom over everything that glittered, would unjustly attack reputations which were irreproachable; but if this was sufficient to amuse the malice of the mob, it was not sufficient to authorize the latter in hurling itself into those excesses which it condemned as shameful exceptions. Thus, at the court of Louis IX; where manners were as regular as the rigidity of the holy King could make them, calumny had dared to attack the good renown of the King's own mother; and yet, it was not Thibaut, Count of Champagne, who thus brought a smirch to the reputation of Queen Blanche of Castile. It is well known that the passion of the gentle Count of Champagne did not in any wise prejudice the conjugal honor of King Louis VIII; it was, on the part of the Count, an

affaire de trouvère; he had chosen Queen Blanche for his lady, and he composed in her honor amorous songs, which he caused to be written upon the walls of his châteaux at Troyes and in Provence, and which he himself sang to his own accompaniment; but this was as far as the thing went, and the people knew it well enough. But Queen Blanche, however pious and however austere she may have been, was reported to have had relations less innocent with the Cardinal Romain, Papal Legate in France. Now the scholars of the University of Paris, who had cause to complain of the intervention of the court of Rome and the ecclesiastical authorities in their quarrels, took vengeance on the Legate by putting him into a leonine distich, which Mathieu Paris has preserved for us in his Chronicle:

Heu! morimur strati, vinsti, mersi, spoliati!
Mentula Legati nos facit ista pati!

The supposed amours of the Legate with Blanche of Castile had no other moral effect upon the populace (*populaire*), which had under its eyes, as an imposing contrast, the *prudhommie* of the young king, the severity of his laws (*établissements*) and the virtuous school which he made of his entourage.

Under the successors of Louis IX, the court of France preserved the traditions of decency which it owed especially to the reign of this pious monarch. The different Kings who succeeded him, from Phillip the Bold to Charles V, made it a point of honor, according to an old and consecrated expression, not to soil the brilliant purity of the lily; they were, if not austere in their manners, at least very rigid with regard to the manners of their court. Thus, as we have seen, Phillip the Handsome did not spare his three sisters-in-law, the heroines of the Tower of Nesle, and their imprisonment, which undoubtedly followed a trial behind closed doors, proved to the people that the mantle bearing the fleur-de-lis was not meant to cover the shame of Prostitution. Phillip the Handsome, thus, at the expense of his own family, satisfied the moral sentiments of his subjects, who preserved the

memory of the horrible debauches of Marguerite of Burgundy by means of a song, the refrain of which has come down to our day in the mouths of nurses and children. The story was that the scholars, who passed in front of the Tower of Nesle in order to betake themselves to the Pre-aux-Clercs, the ordinary scene of their promenades and their pleasures, would sing in a deep voice: *La tour, prends garde de te laisser abattre!* ("There is the Tower; don't let yourself be seduced!") And yet this tower, which had been the scene of the orgies of princesses, or of a single one whom history has not clearly distinguished among the three, was not torn down till the middle of the seventeenth century.

The court of Charles V was not less commendable than that of St. Louis, and it may be supposed that it exerted a salutary influence over public manners; for not only had the wise King taken care to cultivate those virtues which came from *noblesse de corage*, but he also desired that the ladies of Paris should have frequent contact with the ladies of the court, in order that they might thus become more perfect through virtuous emulation. Christine de Pisan says that the *femmes d'estat* of Paris were sent to the hotel Saint-Pol, when the King or the Queen held full court (*cour plénière*) there; the Queen, who was beautiful, good and gracious, received them courteously; there was dancing, singing and joyous cheer, but everything that took place was done with an eye to "the honor and reverence of the King." The historian of the "deeds and good manners" of Charles V reminds us that of nobility of heart are born good manners and virtuous actions, the conquest of bad habits and "villainous works" (*oeuvres vilaines*), abundance of grace, praise, honor, love, courtesy, charity, peace and tranquility.

But at the death of the King, the aspect of the court changed suddenly, as though modesty and chastity had followed Charles V to the tomb. The young King Charles VI and especially his brother Louis, Duke of Orleans, were impatient in the pursuit of pleasure, and they received only too much encouragement in their debauched inclinations from their four uncles, the Dukes of Anjou, of Bourbon, of Burgundy, and of Berry, who had borne

with constraint the moral tyranny of their virtuous brother. All the historians are in agreement in saying that Prostitution appears to have been unchanged at the court of France following the marriage of Charles V with Isabeau of Bavaria. We have already spoken of the frightful disorders which marked the famous tournament of Saint-Denis in 1389. "These jousts," according to the picturesque expressions of a contemporary, "became tournaments of lubricity (*lubrica factasunt*).” On the last night of the fete, everybody was masked, and this masquerade led to strange deportments; these began with indecent postures and ended in acts of debauchery, and if we are to believe the chronicler, there was barely a single person who was not called upon to satisfy "the women and girls as well as men." It was, it is said, at the height of this occasion that the Duke of Orleans met under masks Isabeau of Bavaria, wife of his brother, the King, and Marguerite of Bavaria, wife of his cousin, John of Burgundy. "And it was common report," says Jean Juvenal des Ursins, in his *Histoire de Charles VI*, "that the said jousts were accompanied by indecent things in the matter of amours, and that many evils came from them."

The Duke of Orleans was a debauchee who was tireless in seducing all women whom he desired. He did not limit himself to the great ladies; he kidnapped those of low condition and won their favors by flattery or force. Du Haillan relates that this Prince had in his hotel Barbette a chamber wholly filled with portraits of his mistresses; the portrait of Isabeau of Bavaria is to be found beside that of her relative, Marguerite of Bavaria, Duchess of Burgundy. The Duke, Jean-Sans-Peur, entered this chamber, and there saw the portrait of his wife. He swore to be revenged, and a short time after, he assassinated the Duke of Orleans, a few paces from his hotel, in the rue Barbette.* Louis of Orleans, despite the fact that he had a wife worthy of all affection and respect, the beautiful and gracious Ballantyne of Milan whose reputation has been tarnished by no cloud whatever,

*J. U. N.'s Note:) Compare, in the respect, Balzac's conte *La Fausse Courtisane*.

was constantly a participant in the tournaments of pleasure (*ebattements and folâtreries*) of the court, following the madness of his brother. In this, he was only too well seconded by the Queen, whom he had debauched, and who debauched many others in her turn. Masquerades were then the principal divertissements of the court, and those who took part in them "in masks and in dissolute habits" had recourse to this disguise in order to "play at amours" (*jouer de leurs amours*)." A masquerade of this sort at the carnival of 1393 ended in so sinister a manner that the companions of the King's debauchery saw in it a warning from Heaven and were converted from their sins for a number of days.

This terrible *ballet des ardents* has cast, as it were, a somber glow over the whole reign of Charles VI, who fell into madness following the event. This was a ball which was given at the hotel Saint-Pol, in honor of the marriage of a lady of honor of the Queen. The bride had already had three husbands, and according to an old and widespread custom in France, this widow who was flying to her fourth marriage bed had to be given a charivari. "It is a ridiculous custom," says the anonymous chronicler of Saint-Denis, "and one contrary to all laws of decency and honor."* Nevertheless, it was the custom to do honor to the old rite by disguising oneself in immodest habits and masks, pursuing with obscene words (*ignominiosa verba*) the bride and bridegroom, who endured a thousand insults. The King and five lords of his court were this time actors in the charivari; they clothed themselves from head to foot in a costume of linen, closely drawn, to which had been fastened oakum and pitch; they then entered the drawing room with horrible cries, running in from all sides with indecent gestures; then they danced the sarasin in so furious a fashion that they appeared to be demons. The Duke of Orleans

*A custom which still exists in rural portions of the United States, the word being commonly corrupted to "shivaree." The bedroom peeking is replaced with noise, equally obscene—tin pans, etc.† Cf., also the rice, old shoes, *et al.*

†(J. U. N.'s Note:) As to the "bedroom peeking being replaced with noise," I very well remember, as a boy in Kansas, that the actual peeking was indulged in, led on by the brother of the bride. A common jest, also, was to present to the wedded pair a *pot de chambre* filled with cider and doughnuts.

took a torch and hurled it on the devils which set them all on fire at once; they were chained one to another, and all were burned alive, with the exception of the King, who succeeded in breaking his chains, and who hid himself under the robes of the Duchess of Berry. The chronicler draws a frightful picture of the death of these unfortunate ones. "The fire," he says, "consumed also the interior portions of their bodies and their virile members (*genitalia cum virgis virilibus frustatim cadentia*), which fell in shreds, flooding with blood the floor of the drawing room." (Translation of M. Bellaguet: *Chron. du Religieux de Saint-Denis*, Volume II, page 69.) Charles VI was miraculously saved and thanked God for it in a solemn procession, in which the Princes went with naked feet from the porte Montmartre to Notre-Dame.

The malady of the King suspended the fetes but not the disorderly carrying-on of the court. The Queen and her lover, the Duke of Orleans, protected the disorderly and assured them impunity. However, as a tribute to public indignation, exemplary justice was done on two Augustinian monks, who had been brought to court to cure the King and who had not succeeded in keeping their promise; these monks had defiled the royal hotel of Tournesles, where they had been lodged, by indulging in a traffic with infamous lenons (*per lenones infames*): they brought dishonor into families and committed continual adulteries which were paid for in the King's money. These hypocrites were degraded, after having confessed their turpitudes, and were decapitated in the Place de Grève. They found an avenger in a monk of their order named Jacques Legrand (*Jacobus Magnus*), who came to preach before the Queen three or four years later: "I desire," he said, "to say, noble Queen, nothing which shall not be agreeable to you; but your health is dearer to me than your good graces and so I shall speak the truth. The goddess Venus alone reigns in your court; Drunkenness and Debauchery (*commessacio*) serve her as a cortege and turn night into day with

the most dissolute dances.* These accursed and infernal followers, who incessantly besiege your court, corrupt manners and enervate hearts." Passing on then to the question of luxurious vestments, which the Queen had been responsible for introducing, he censured these energetically: "Everywhere, noble Queen," he cried with vehemence, "there is talk of these disorders, and of many others which dishonor your court. If you do not believe me, run through the city in the guise of a poor woman, and you shall hear what everyone is saying!"

Isabeau of Bavaria found it difficult to conceal her anger; but the demoiselles of her train approached the preacher and told him they were astonished at his audacity. "And I," replied Jacques Legrand, "I am a good deal more astonished that you dare to commit so many evil actions and even worse ones, which I shall reveal in full to the Queen, when it shall please her to hear me!" One of the officers of the Queen wanted to shut the mouth of this insolent friar. "If you take my advice," he said, "you will hurl this miserable wretch into the river."—"Yes, undoubtedly," replied the monk boldly, it would only take a King as wicked as you are to prescribe such a crime." The King appeared to be highly satisfied with the severe remonstrances which the furious preacher had addressed to Isabeau, but he himself never interfered but once in the scandalous gallantries of the Queen; that was in 1419, a few years before his death, when he had judgment and execution performed upon the Chevalier Louis de Bourdon, who was looked upon as being the favored lover of "Madame Isabeau," as the people said. "The Queen," relates the chronicler, "had summoned a great number of men of arms, whom she placed under the command of the Sires de Graville, de Giac and de Bourdon. These chevaliers whose special duty it was to watch night and day over her safety, as well as over that of the ladies of the court, indulged in conduct unworthy of their nobility. Enriched by the Queen's benefices, they had no fear of trampling under foot the honor of Knighthood and with the aid of their procurers (*lenon-*

*The dance appears to have been regarded as a concomitant of evil long before the days of Methodism.

um nutibus continuatis et blanditiis impudicis), they had succeeded in seducing certain ladies of high condition. These adulterous relations, in which they indulged incessantly and unblushingly, even during Holy Week, had aroused the indignation of the great ones of the court, who counselled the King to make an example of them. This was why Louis de Bourdon* was arrested and imprisoned in the tower of Montlhéry, then brought back to Paris and secretly drowned at night in the Seine, to stop the mouths of the people regarding his crime (*ne super ejus scelere vulgus amplius loqueretur*).

Charles VI, in the first years of his reign, had had mistresses by the score (*à la foule*) who disputed the royal preference. The Marechal de Boucicaut says, on this point, that "the sight of so many nobles and fine ladies aroused the courage and the desire to be amorous." But from the day he fell insane, physicians began to restrain the abuses he had made of his physical forces, and to remove from him all illegitimate occasions of squandering his prodigious and erotic ardor. The Queen, under these delicate circumstances, refused her conjugal duties to the poor demented King and would escape from his bed or would repel with disdain the caresses of her spouse; the latter, furious and outraged, would sometimes permit himself to strike her. It was to relieve these connubial exigencies that Madame Isabeau conceived the idea of selecting a victim who would lend herself without resistance to the King's good pleasure. This victim was named Odette de Champeivers; she was probably of good family, and the people, who pitied her, without casting any shame upon her for the role which she had accepted, nicknamed her the "little Queen." Odette slept at the foot of the King's bed, and when she would hear the beginning of the *riote* between Charles VI and his wife, she would glide into the royal couch while Isabeau of Bavaria left it. The King did not appear to perceive that he had by his side another woman than the Queen, and yet, he ceased his beatings, and he would sometimes recover his reason in the

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Julien de Boys—Bourredon (Balzac's Conte, *La Con-nestable*).

arms of the "little Queen." The latter employed her influence with the unhappy King to force him to change his linen and to submit to the necessary and proper ablutions.

It has been supposed, with some appearance of probability, that the insanity of the King was the natural consequence of the excesses to which he had given himself in his youth, and yet, his brother, the Duke of Orleans, who had had "as many mistresses as there are days in the year," to make use of the picturesque expression of the lower classes at this time, never displayed any symptoms of madness. He did not pride himself, however, on being a model of prudence and of reason, but permitted himself *gaîtés* which bore witness to his debauched imagination. Sauval, in his *Amours des Rois de France*, has related the adventure of the lady of Canny as a proof of the degeneracy of manners at the court of Charles VI; but we do not know the original source from which the historian of the *Antiquites de Paris* has drawn his tale, and it is our opinion that tradition has furnished at least the details of this story. The Duke of Orleans was passionately in love with the Dame de Canny; the husband of this lady suspected nothing of this intrigue, which, however, was the talk of all the world, not only of court, but also among the populace. One morning the Duke and his mistress, who had passed the night together, heard the voice of the Sire de Canny, demanding audience with the Prince. The latter ordered that he be admitted; but not until he had covered the lady's face with the bedclothes. The Sire de Canny, having been brought in, the Duke offered to show him the most beautiful body he had ever seen, on condition he would not seek to know the person who was in the bed. Thereupon, Louis of Orleans uncovered this lady, who was wholly naked, and permitted the poor husband to view her at his ease, to admire her most secret beauties, and even to touch them, in order better to appreciate what they were worth. Canny was charmed with what he saw; his admiration was expressed with a warmth which caused the Duke of Orleans to laugh till he cried. There was also laughter under the covers. The following night the Sire de Canny sharing the bed of his wife was tireless in describing

to her what he had seen; while the lady laughed at the transports which she did not dare to boast of having inspired. She laughed over the matter again the following day with her lover. All the court was diverted by the adventure, which was only a mystery for the deceived and cuckold (*cocquard*) husband.*

The court of Charles VII, at least in the beginning, did not differ from that of his father; the King was even more ardent in the pursuit of pleasure than Charles VI had even been; but pleasure, as he understood it, consisted less in licentious orgies than in gallantries and in "light joustings" (*folâtres ébattements*); this was true Chivalry, although at once more refined and more relaxed than that of the century preceding. He did not set an example of debauchery for his courtiers, for he understood the love of ladies in the same fashion as the ancient chevaliers, and he accompanied this "perfect love" (*parfait amour*) with tourneys, joustes, *emprises* and knightly fetes. The English were masters of his realm, and the King of England reigned at Paris, while Charles VII in his little court of Bourges, dreamed only of breaking lances for the honor of fair ladies, of reading romances, of dancing to *chansons* and of hunting *au bol et a coudre*. He had a mistress, and he never had any other after he had once fallen hopelessly in love with her. The beautiful Agnès Sorel had been attached at first to the house of Queen Marie of Anjou, and during the first five years the *demoiselle de Fromenteau*, as she was called at court, passed with the Queen, it was not generally known that she had captivated the heart of the King. This secret was revealed by the favor which the Sorel or Soreau family suddenly came to enjoy and by the "great and excessive trappings of furred robes, of collars of gold, and of precious stones" which this *demoiselle* did not fear to wear at the public ceremonies, where she eclipsed by the luxury of her toilet the noblest of dames. Then, says Monstrelet in his *Chronicle*, "it was commonly reported that the King kept her in concubinage." Agnès Sorel would appear to have been pretty rather than beautiful,

* (J. U. N.'s Note:) Evidently, then, this is the basis for Balzac's conte, *D'ung Iusticiard*.

seductive rather than imposing; her character was playful and her conversation diverting (*lepida et faceta*, says the chronicler, Gaguin.) The passion of Charles VII for the pretty Agnès, was then, not unworthy of the King of France, if we consider the fact that it was this passion alone which decided the "little King of Bourges" to reconquer his crown and to expel the English from France. One day when Charles was consulting an astrologer regarding Agnès' destiny, the astrologer replied that this beautiful demoiselle had been long loved by a great and powerful monarch. At once Agnès arose and saluted the King: "Sire," she said to him gravely, "I supplicate you to permit me to fly to the court of King Henry, for I must fulfill my destiny. It is the English King whom this prediction orders me to serve, and he is also the true King of France, while you are barely the King of Bourges." Charles VII was struck with the justice of this reproach, coming to him from so beautiful a mouth; he was ashamed of his abasement, and to please Agnès, and in order to be esteemed by her, he took no repose until France had been delivered from the oppression of the English, and until he had been crowned at Rheims.

The service which Agnès had rendered the royal lily and to France deserved to efface whatever was illegitimate in her liaison with Charles VII. Francis I desired to restore the memory of Agnès by means of this quatrain which is an historic document in support of tradition:

*Gentille Agnès, plus d'honneur tu mérites,
La cause estant la France recouvrer,
Que ce que peut dedans un cloistre ouvrir
Close nonnain ou bien devot hermite.**

But the opinion of contemporaries was not so favorable to the pretty Agnès, who could not, whatever she may have been, escape

*Gentle Agnes, more honor without doubt
Belongs to you, the cause being our dear France,
Than in a cloister any pious nun, by chance,
Or hermit might win, no matter how devout.

the abjectness of a prostitute from the point of view of public morality. When she would appear in public, a throng would form about her, but she was not spared disdainful looks, mocking remarks and threatening insults. She came just once to Paris, towards the end of April, 1448, and she left it a few days afterward, saying that the Parisians "were but villains, and that if she had known that she would be given no greater honor than that, she would never have set foot in the town." The Bourgeois de Paris, who has reported in his *Journal* the arrival of Agnès at Paris, reports that "the saying is that she is loved publicly by the King of France, without faith and without law, and without truth to the good Queen whom he had espoused; and it soon appeared that she kept as great state as a countess or a duchess, and she often went and came with the good Queen, without being ashamed of her sin, for which the Queen had much sorrow in her heart." Charles VII respected public opinion enough not to avow loudly the adulterous relations which had existed for eighteen or nineteen years between himself and Agnès, he had had by her four daughters, of whom three lived and bore the title de France, like the legitimate children of the King; upon the birth of the first of these four daughters, who died a few days afterward, "Agnès," says Monstrelet, "declared that she was of the King and gave her to him openly as heir apparent; but the King always excused himself and did not recognize the claim. She might well have gotten it elsewhere." But Charles VII recognized his three other bastards, who were well provided for and well married under the reign of Louis XI. It may be believed, however, that during the lifetime of their father, they had not appeared at court, and that their birth was somewhat ignored, since historians like Jean Chartier and Enguerrand de Monstrelet have dared to maintain that there was nothing more innocent than the liaison of Agnès Sorel and the King: "The love which the King showed her," says Monstrelet, "was not on account of the follies, sportiveness, joyousness and well polished language which was in her." If Charles VII refrained from an official mistress, this sentiment of modesty on his part proves that he felt the necessity of the King's setting an

example of good manners, and that he did not want his court to be decreed as a den of Prostitution. We may deduce from this that the manners of this court had mended, especially during the last years of the King's lifetime, the monarch becoming as he grew older, sorrowful, morose and solitary.

The people of Paris always remembered with horror the *Ballet des Ardents* and the obscene masquerades which had taken place in the dwellings of the King, Queen and the Princes; the public undoubtedly had conceived a wholly exaggerated idea of these courtly pastimes, for it saw, in the evils which desolated the reign of Charles VI, a punishment of the impieties and the infamies which this unfortunate King had authorized by his example. It is likely enough that the masquerades at this epoch were not merely disguises invented for the pleasure of the eyes; these disguises always had something about them: sometimes certain parts of the body which modesty bids should be hidden, were placed in evidence, but not openly revealed; sometimes the mask itself presented, in place of the human physiognomy, the monstrous attributes of the masculine sex; sometimes the *marotte* or *momon*, which was inseparable from the mask, would represent a priapic figure; sometimes the draperies with which the *porteur de momon* was covered were all variegated with images of indecent devices. This was not all; these *dissimulated* and *dissolute* were, for the men who made use of them, means of satisfying their passions without being recognized; as a result, women were violated or insulted. The amorous who were also intelligent made use of these masks and travesties to enable them to communicate with each other and obtain privacy under the eyes of a father or a mother, of a husband or a wife, in the face of all the court. It was not, however, the court which had conceived these masquerades; the court had done no more than imitate the *Fête des Fous*, which was celebrated in the Middle Ages in the majority of the churches and convents of Christendom, and which was the direct and lineal descendent of the Saturnalia of paganism. This Feast of Fools had not yet disappeared in the fifteenth century, despite the efforts of the episcopacy, which had endeavored in vain to de-

stroy it since the establishment of the Christian religion among the Gauls. Gregory of Tours, in his *Histoire de France*, (Book X, Chapter 16), mentions an episcopal decree rendered against the religious of Poitiers who had celebrated the *barbatoires*. This was the name given to the Feast of Fools, on account of the bearded hideous and fantastic masks with which the actors covered their faces. "The first of January, on the day of the Circumcision, the Cathedral of Paris was invaded by a multitude of masked folk, who profaned it with immodest dances, forbidden games, infamous songs, sacreligious buffooneries and a thousand excesses of every sort, even to the point of shedding blood. The priests and the clerics were the instigators and the accomplices of these scandalous masquerades, which spread through the streets and brought disorder to all the city." (See, in *Le Moyen Age et la Renaissance*, the chapter on the *Fête des Fous* by P. Lacroix.* The Bishop Eudes de Sully was forced to threaten with excommunication anyone, priest or layman, who should take part in these shameful orgies, which were renewed every year under the name of *Liberté de Décembre*; the Feast of Fools was only celebrated with all the more fury in the Church. It was finally necessary for the civil authorities to come to the aid of the ecclesiastical authorities, to put a stop to, or rather to restrict excesses which were not limited to the election of a pope or a bishop of the Fools, by those who were called his "subjects," and who submitted to his joyous prescriptions during the whole duration of his mad reign. And yet, this Feast of Fools, so varied in its names, in its customs and its burlesque liturgy, was not definitely suppressed in France until the middle of the seventeenth century.†

The people took a singular pleasure in the grotesque shows (*montres*) which were the obligatory accessories of all these carnival-like fetes; the people always loved the extraordinary and they would quit labor and business in order to see a caval-

*Our author.

†(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf., the *Mardi Gras* still celebrated in New Orleans, and celebrated there, so late as 1907, exactly as our author here describes the *Fête des Fous*.

cade of bizzarrely clad and masked men passing in the street.* If the police had not intervened in the interests of public order, the masks and travesties would have multiplied along with the crimes and disorders which they only too greatly favored. Kings and parliaments issued numerous edicts to forbid them. We may form an idea of the indecencies which were committed under pretense of these masquerades, by reading the following passage from Sauval: By the end of the year (December, 1502), the maskers no longer ran about the streets disguised as fools, holding in their hands sticks stuffed with straw or hair and shaped like priapi, with which they struck all whom they met in their path." (*Antiq. de Paris*, Book XII, page 651.)

One of the most licentious variations of the Feast of Fools was established in the fourteenth century in Normandy, notably at Evreux and at Rouen; the *gens de Conardie*, brothers of St. Barnabas, elected a chief called the *abbé des Conards*, who visited his States mounted upon an ass, clad in a tufted monk's hood, brandishing his *marotte* like a scepter, and surrounded by his *conards*. This *abbé des Conards* called before his tribunal all smutty cases, pronounced decrees in matters *conardantes* and drew his arguments from the celebrated *Evangile des Connoilles*, an old and naïve repertory of indecent equivocations and free aphorisms. The indecent abbot preserved his ribald jurisdiction in the city of Rouen up to the end of the sixteenth century, when he still made a *show* of his subjects, whom he called conards and not cornards, in accordance with an attempt which has been made to rebaptize them for the sake of an indecent etymology; his subjects were not offended at being called *Innocents* by decent folk, who feared to soil their mouths with a grosser word. Conard (Conardus) was synonymous with *silly* or *foolish* (*stultus* and *fatuus*: French, *sot* and *fou*); but this villainous synonym, which carried with it the stigma of its popular origin, is naturally explained by a proverb which the author of the *Moyen de Parvenir* has not forgotten to record in the old arsenal of Gallic joyousness: one said then, and one still says today, it may be, in the

*Cf., our Ku Klux Klan.

filthy language of the servant hall: *sot comme un c. . . .* (silly as a c. . . .).

This extravagance of the Innocents, or of the Conards, had undoubtedly given birth in France to a very impertinent custom, common among the highest nobility as among the common people, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is only the poets and the raconteurs who make allusion to this custom; but from the detached manner in which they speak of it, we may believe that there was no one to complain of it. Following is the manner in which the Abbé de Lenglet-Dufresnoy in his *Notes on the Words of Clément Marot* (12 mo. edition, Volume III, page 97), explains the custom in question: "Those young persons who are surprised in bed on the day of the Innocents (28th of December) receive upon their behinds a few clacks, and sometimes a little bit more, when the subject is worth the pains. This is no longer practiced today: we are a good deal wiser and a good deal more reserved than our fathers." Lenglet-Dufresnoy wrote this in 1730 or 1731 and fifty years before, the word if not the thing was still in vogue, for we read in Richelet's *Dictionary of the French Language*: "*Donner les innocents a quescum (Aliquem virgis exeipere)*, that is to say, to give them to him upon his rump on the day of the Innocents, and that merely for the sake of a laugh." Clément Marot, in an epigram which has merited a rather free note from his editor, gives us to understand that the day of the Innocents was often but an innocent pretext leading to a result which was not so innocent.

*Très-chere souer, si je scavois où couche
Votre personne au jour des Innocents,
De bon matin je yrois â vostre couche
Veoir ce corps gent, que j'aime entre cinq cens.
Adonc, ma main, vu l'ardeur que je sens,**

*My sister very dear, if I knew where
You sleep upon the Holy Innocents' Day,
I should come early in the morning there
And with that body, loved above five-hundred, play.
Already, my hand, it seems, knows what I say,

*Ne se pourroit bonnement contenter,
 Sans vous toucher, tenir, taster, tenter,
 Et si quelcun survenoit d'avanture,
 Semblant ferois de vous innocenter:
 Seroit-ce pas honneste couverture?**

The "very dear sister" to whom Clément Marot addresses himself with so much familiarity, was none other, if we are to believe tradition and the commentators, than Marguerite de Marguerites, sister of Francis I, the beautiful and seductive Queen of Navarre. We may deduce from this that the sport of Innocents as it was played at court took little account of etiquette. This sport preserved appearances and concealed its mysteries under a "decent covering" (*honête couverte*), according to the Marotic expression. Brantôme, in his *Dames Galantes*, cites on this point a great lady who was esteemed for forty years as "the best woman of the country and the court," and who, "being a widow, came to be amorous of a young gentleman, and not being able to come at him, on the day of the Innocents, went to his chamber to give him the sport; but the gentleman gave them to her very readily, and made use of something else besides rods."

It is easy to appreciate the state of moral depravation into which the court of France had fallen, in adopting such usages, which had sprung up among the people; but we shall soon see that this depravation was pushed still further, under the reign of the Valois, when Italian manners began arriving at the court with Catherine de Medici. Moreover, the sport of Innocents was not the filthiest of those which were played by the ladies of honor to the Queen. These demoiselles found themselves, from their early years, in a dangerous school of gallantry, and one which naturally led to Prostitution. They were spared indecent spectacles no more than they were obscene words. The imagination

*For it will not keep still: nothing will do
 But touching, holding, tasting, tempting you;
 And if some one should come by chance and flick
 You on the rump, pretending pastime true:
 Now would that be a very honest trick?

of these young women was constantly confronted with a multitude of the crudest and grossest joyeusetés in the world; everything which Gallic liberty, masculine or feminine, had created in the way of facetious *rencontres*, libertine equivocations, brazen word-plays and laughable stories was passed from mouth to mouth in the conversations of the court. We should not dare, for example, to extract from the *Advineaux Amoureux* those audacious enigmas which were given for solving to the ladies of the court of Burgundy. It is necessary to read the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles du Bon Roi Louis XI* in order to form an idea of the demoralization of the court of France in the fifteenth century;* but a single custom, more impudent perhaps than the sport of Innocents, a sport everywhere received and authorized, among kings as among beggars, will give us an even better idea of the degree of relaxation at which public morality had arrived. Every marriage, even that of a prince, was an occasion for a scandalous comedy, which would hardly have been pardonable in a land of savagery or in a court of Miracles.

As soon as the newly wedded pair had entered the nuptial chamber, all those who had assisted at the wedding, young and old, foolish and wise, gathered together and set themselves to see and hear all that took place between the pair.† This was not, as with the ancients, a case of children scattering nuts and singing: Hymen! O! Hymenee! This was a general conspiracy, the object of which was to betray the mysteries of the conjugal couch. Some glued their eyes to the cracks of the door, while others spied at the windows; some made a hole through the wall, while others pierced the ceiling. The object was not merely to learn the secrets of the marital couch; it frequently was to deprive the pair of the courage to be themselves. Whatever might be surprised by the eyes of those Argusses fed the curiosity and the malice of

* (J. U. N.'s Note:) De Balzac's conte, *Joyeusetez du Roy Loys Le Unziesme*.

† A similar sport, between a rustic and a girl, with the spectators paying for peep-hole privileges, was practiced in a certain house in the old Chicago red-light district. In this case, the girl, being aware of the audience, led the man on. J. U. N. adds: Cf. also the actions of Garcilla and the author of the *Satyricon* in peeping at the Catamite who is taken in mock marriage by a girl.

these *gens de la noce*. It is easy to understand how this indiscreet custom had come to be established in the country, among peasants little gifted with delicacy, but it is surprising to find it in the court, more widespread than anywhere else. It was a sort of tribute which the married paid to the libertinism of their friends. Each cry, each complaint of the bride, would provoke on the part of the audience, a rain of bravoës in honor of the husband.*

Clément Marot, who assisted at the marriage of Madam Renée of France, daughter of King Louis XII to the Duke of Ferrars, in July, 1528, makes allusion to this fine custom, from which, the Princess, undoubtedly, was not exempt. He informs us, in his *Chant Nuptial*, that the ladies were not less curious than the men regarding the episodes of a wedding night.

*Vous qui soupez, laissez ce tables grasses:
Le manger peu vaut mieux pour bien danser,
Sus, ausmosniers, dictes vistement Graces;
Le mari dict qu'il se faut avancer.
Le jour luy fasche, on le peut bien penser.
Dansez, dansez! et que l'on se deporté,
Si m'en croyez, d'escouter a la porte
S'il donnera l'assault sur la my-nuict.
Chaut appetit en tels lieux se transporte:
Dangereuse est la bien heureuse nuict.†*

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf. the mediaeval "Droit du Seigneur" in which the husband was sometimes peeper to his wife's defloration. This custom, which dates from patriarchal times, was not universal in Europe, for which reason our author may have seen fit to discredit, or at least, to ignore it. But that it did exist as a theoretical right sometimes practised, is unquestionable. See, in this connection, my *Drums of Yle*, Covici, Chicago, 1925.

†You who still sup, come, leave the laden table;
The less you eat, the better you will dance.
Up, almoners, you Graces of old fable,
The husband says it is time now to advance.
He's tired of day; he longs to hurl a lance.
Then dance! dance! dance often and yet more,
Till the time comes to listen at the door
While he makes the assault without a light.
Our appetites are gone; then to the chore:
Oh, dangerous is that very happy night.

It was probably as dangerous for the ladies and the demoiselles who went there to seek special instructions, as for the bride, though the latter played a role all the more difficult for the reason that each one of her words was repeated by malicious echoes. We should not be astonished, after all this, at the multitude of *contes gras*, *epigrammes plaisantes* and *bon mots* which the *nuit bien heureuse* furnished our fathers. All these stories, gross or naïve, were taken as facts; they were collected* with particular care and constituted the ordinary material of conversation on the day after a wedding night.† Brantôme has not forgotten this chapter in his *Dames Galantes*, where it is said that on the bridal evening "each one was at the keyhole, according to a custom."

This day or night, where everything took place, as it were, before witnesses, in the manner of the marriage contract, must have been sufficiently terrifying for the newly wed. The great thing was not to make a misstep, according to the saying of a clever lady who had experienced the hazards and perils of the situation. The husband frequently played rather a crude game, for it behooved him, in a manner, to make proof of the virginity of his wife. The latter might be very embarrassed at being forced to appear what she was not, and sometimes it was necessary to make very painful confessions; but, as Brantôme says, "there are a hundred other remedies which are better, such as those messieurs the physicians, savants and expert apothecaries know so well how to order, invent and apply." Following is one of these remedies which Brantôme had received from an empiric: "it is necessary to have blood suckers and put them to do the work of nature, to draw and suck the blood, which blood suckers, in sucking, leave and engender small ampules and fistulas full of blood, in so likely a fashion that the gallant husband, who comes to assail them on the wedding night, breaks these ampules from which the blood gushes out, he and she being both all bloody,

*A marvelous collection of modern "*contes gras*" and "*epigrammes plaisantes*" might be made. It would possess undoubted literary value. Cf., for example, what Raymond Geiger has done in France with his *Histoires juives*."

†This custom, too, appears to be sempiternal.

which is a great joy to one and to the other, and thus the *honor della cittadella e salvo.*" Brantôme, in the chapter on cuckolds, enters into still more technical details, which are not out of place in his *Dames Galantes*, but which might be here, although they belong essentially to the history of Prostitution.

Moreover, we have said enough on this ticklish subject, to give an idea of the state of manners in a society which did not even respect the institution which was its own holiest and firmest base, not even at the moment when the priest came to bless the nuptial bed. It may be asked what sort of innocence girls could possess who had been, before the age of puberty, initiated into those secrets which marriage could no longer teach them, and who found themselves subjected to this species of obscene pillory which sometimes left its mark upon their husbands and their children. Scandal was even more bold and noisy when a widow remarried; but there, at least, in the midst of all the *salauderies* of the charivari, which knew neither bounds nor bridle, there was no question of the purity of a young bride, given a prey to the moral defilement of immodest glances and the language of libertines.

CHAPTER XXX

THE Dauphin Louis, elder son of Charles VII, was in his youth as great a libertine as his grandfather, Charles VI had been; he had a great number of mistresses who gave him a number of bastards, whom he did not find it difficult to recognize, to provide with dowries, and to marry off, while he was on the throne; according to tradition, he cast also a number of illegitimates into bourgeois families, where he had certain "god-mothers" with whom he did not cease to keep company when he became King; his favorites and his servants did not pride themselves on a conduct any more regular than that of their master, and his little court, in Dauphiné, as at Geneppe in Brabant, where he sought asylum against paternal wrath, was distinguished from the courts of France and Burgundy at this epoch by the relaxation of manners and especially by the depravation of the majority of those who composed it. It is sufficient to leaf through the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles du Bon Roi Louis XI* in order to form an idea of the spirit of debauchery which inspired the gaiety of this court, in which each one prided himself on his gallant prowess and kept a record of it, so to speak, by divulging his feats under the transparent veil of suppositious names. The Dauphin encouraged by his own example the license of these raconteurs, Antoine de la Sale, the Sire of Dampmartin, Jean de la Roche and other officers of his house, who of an evening, seated in the nook of a vast chimney, appeared to be competing in the boldness of their obscene recitals.

The women, it is true, did not sit in upon these occasions; they lived at that time a very retired life, surrounded in the mystery of the domestic household; they had no relations with the men beyond those ceremonies at which they appeared in public. They passed the time at manual labor in the interior of the ménage;

they had fewer occasions than they did impulses to do wrong; they were ready enough for love, schooled as they were by the reading of the romances of Chivalry but their virtue was safeguarded by a courtly etiquette which permitted no one to come at them. Thus, Marguerite d'Écosse, first wife of Louis XI, was gravely compromised by the mere fact that she had been found without a light in her own apartment with her women and two or three gentlemen. One of the latter named Jamet de Tillay, prided himself on having obtained from the Dauphin's lady some favor, a favor limited, doubtlessly, to a *doux propos* or to a squeeze of the hand. Calumny, however, laid hold of the indiscretion of Jamet de Tillay and two or three witnesses attributed to him very insulting words respecting this Princess, who, after having at first received him very well, afterwards held him at a distance on account of his indiscretion. According to these witnesses, Jamet had said, in pointing out the Dauphin's lady, that "she sometimes girdled herself too tightly, sometimes too laxly," indicating that she passed her nights in reading or making *rondeaux*: "have you seen that lady? she has rather the manner of a lecheress than of a great mistress!" But the sire of Tillay, while justifying himself for having spoken ill of the Dauphin's lady, permitted a suspicion to rest upon her graver than the bitter words with which he denied his wrong speaking; he related, in the inquiry which was held on this subject after the death of Marguerite d'Écosse, that this Princess was "couched upon her couch" (*couchée sur sa couche*), having a number of her women about her before the torches had been lighted; messire Regnault, maître d'hôtel to the Dauphin's lady, and another gentleman were both leaning "over the couch" of Marguerite; the speech in the chamber was low, and there were intervals of silence. Jamet de Tillay, who entered at that moment, made a lively remark to messire Regnault to the effect "that it was a great lechery in him and in the other officers of the said lady that the torches were not yet lighted." Haste was made to light the torches, but the Dauphin's lady was so afflicted by the unworthy words of Jamet de Tillay, that she fell into a profound melancholy and died of consump-

tion. One of the ladies of honor, Jeanne de Trasse, meeting the Sire de Tillay face to face after the poor Princess had breathed her last sigh, could not refrain from saying to him threateningly: "ah, false and evil ribald, she died for you!" The rumor ran through the court that the Sire de Tillay had been the lover of Marguerite, and that his jealousy toward a rival had inspired in him the stinging words which had mortally affected the Dauphin's lady.

History has avenged the honor of this Princess who was undoubtedly but little disposed to gallantry. She it was who, entering a garden where the poet Alain Chartier had fallen asleep, approached him and kissed him on the mouth. "I never before kissed a man," she said to the persons of her suite, who were all the more astonished by reason of the fact that maître Alain was the ugliest man in France. "I merely kissed the mouth from which had come so many beautiful things." Marguerite was of remarkable beauty, but her husband approached her with having fetid breath;* as Comines says, he had married her "to his displeasure, and so long as she lived, he regretted the fact." When he lost her in 1444, he did not think at first of taking another wife, although she had not given him a child. It was not until 1451 that he was married to Charlotte of Savoy. This Princess was but six years old on the day of her wedding, and the marriage was not consummated until the day Charlotte attained the age of puberty; she was then barely twelve years when she entered the bed of her spouse. The latter, while he waited for her, had not slackened his amours; he was greatly taken with two demoiselles, Phélise Renard and Marguerite de Sassenage; he had by them three or four children; but he preferred to women of quality the simple bourgeois girls, the wives and daughters of merchants.† That was why he selected at Dijon Hugette Jacque-

*Attention has been drawn by modern authorities on sex to the sexual importance of the breath, particularly in marriage. "Halitosis" is something more than an ad-writer's catchword.

†A common complex in all ages, representing, doubtless, the quest of sexual difference. A recent treatment of the theme in French literature will be found in Drieu La Rochelle's "L'Homme Couvert de Femmes."

lin, at Lyons La Gigonne, and at Paris La Passefilon; he kept them simultaneously, took them with him on his travels and made them share his couch after suppers at which the *contes gras* had provided the seasoning. He did not blush to be seen in public with La Gigonne and La Passefilon, who were well known to the people: they were called the "godmothers of the King" (*commères du roi*), but their respectability (*honnêteté*: it is the word of which the chronicler Jean de Troyes makes use) had won for them the respect of all, despite the sufficiently dishonorable duties which they shared in the King's chambers. The bourgeoisie were not indignant to see that Louis preferred the little bourgeois girl to the great ladies; and his two "godmothers," La Gigonne and La Passefilon, who did not pride themselves on their Prostitution, like Agnès Sorel, did not have, like the latter, to complain of the ill conduct of the people of Paris toward them. It is our opinion that the names Gigonne and Passefilon were soubriquets which had been given their bearers out of raillery, but there is nothing to guide us in an inquiry into the etymology of these names. They were both married under the auspices of their royal protector, and both gave birth to respectable families. A long time after their reign as courtesans, the populace still danced a jig known as *la Gigonne*, while the women wore their hair *a la Passefilon*; but the origin of the coiffure and the dance had long since been forgotten.

Despite the role which these two women played simultaneously with the King, a role which appears to have continued after their marriage in 1476, the biographer of Louis XI, Philippe de Comines, bears witness to the fact that this Prince, having lost in 1459 a son named Joachin, "made a vow to God, in my presence, never to touch any woman but the Queen, his wife." It is known that Louis XI was not deadly concerned with keeping an oath; yet Comines appears to believe that he persevered in this rash vow, "although the Queen," he adds, "was not one of those with whom one takes great pleasure, but otherwise a very good lady." As a matter of fact, Charlotte of Savoy, who had been in the power of her husband from the age of six, lived almost always a very

retired life in the château of Amboise, "keeping very little state," says Brantôme, "and being very poorly clad, like a simple demoiselle, and there she was left with a little court to say her prayers, while he (the King) went promenading about and having a good time. It is not astonishing that this Princess whom Louis XI did not love led a chaste and virtuous existence in this abandoned retreat; the little court which surrounded her was undoubtedly less wise than she. But Louis XI, who frequently changed his residence, and who had about him, as Comines says, (Book VI, chapter 13) so many women "at his command" (*à son commandement*), did not honor his vow of conjugal fidelity until he became old, infirm and moribund.

It might, then, be said that the court of France, under this reign, did not set an example of decency and restraint in manners. There was, among the great as among the small, a general abandonment in ideas, actions and words; metaphysical and romantic love, of which Chivalry had been the code, had yielded to a positive and material love which frequently led to debauchery and to scandal. Nothing was to be heard of but deceived husbands, intriguing widows, libertine wives, seduced girls. The tales of Boccaccio had, in a manner, put on body and soul in French society. After so many public calamities, after war, pestilence, famine and misery, there was no thought of anything except redeeming time lost and seeking amusement. Prostitution had made much progress, on account of the difficulty in earning a livelihood by honest labor; thus this passage from the *Journal du Bourgeois de Paris* (in 1435) however obscure it may be, leaves no doubt as to the sufferings and embarrassments of working women: "In that time when each one had learned a trade, wages were so bad that the good women who had been trained to earn five or six *blancs* a day gave themselves readily for two and lived upon them." It is possible that these "good women" were not prostitutes, as an attempt has been made to make them out to be, but in any case, an unfortunate one who did not earn more than two *blancs* a day for livelihood, must have been only too ready to give her body in exchange for a few

sous. The reign of Louis XI, to judge by different facts reported in the *Chronique Scandaleuse* of Jean de Troyes, was still more favorable than the preceding reigns had been to Prostitution properly so called.

Certainly, public morality was little respected at an epoch when, upon the fetes attending the entry of the King at Paris in 1461, there were exposed to public view "three very beautiful girls wholly nude, and one could see their beautiful teats, round and hard, which was a thing very pleasant to see;" at an epoch when the talking (*jargonneurs*) birds, magpies, jays and screech owls could only repeat obscene words, like *paillard* (lecher), *fil de putain** (son of a whore) and "a number of other fine words," remarks Jean de Troyes, in 1468; at an epoch when a gross Norman who kept his own daughter, had by her a number of children whom he slew, in conspiracy with the daughter, as soon as they were born (1466); at an epoch when a monk "had both sexes, the man and the woman, each aiding the other in such a fashion that he became large with child" and had an accouchement (1478); at an epoch, finally, when a valet de chambre of the King, named Regnault la Pie, had public relations with the aged wife of Maître Nicole Bataille, the most learned legalist of France, who died of chagrin and of rage (*de courroux*) in 1482, after having seen his entire fortune squandered to the lechery of this blackguard wife (*chagorne*) and her *ribaux particuliers* (see, under the dates indicated, the *Chronique Scandaleuse* written by a registrar of the town hall of Paris).†

Louis XI did nothing but laugh at these adventures; he laughed more heartily than ever upon learning that his minister, Cardinal La Balue, who had adulterous relations with the wife of a notary in Paris, a woman named Jeanne Debois and "famous for her amours," as Sauval says, had fallen into a trap which one of his rivals, the Seigneur de Villiers-le-Bocage, had set for him upon his return from one of these gallant visits. At the moment that the prelate, mounted upon his mule and accompanied by his

*Our modern "son of a b——."

†(J. U. N.'s Note:) See Balzac's conte *La Mye du Roi*.

torch bearers, was passing through the rue Barre-du-Bec, a troop of armed men suddenly attacked him, and he would perhaps have been thrown to the pavement if his mule had not taken the bit in his teeth and carried him all the way to the cloister of Notre Dame where he dwelt.* This affair had no serious consequence for the authors of the plot, for the reason that the prelate, who feared being compromised by a public proceeding, as well as his mistress, brought pressure to bear to stop any action on the part of the authorities. A trial of another sort, more scandalous, which occurred in 1477, failed to compromise very gravely a favorite of the King who was at once his barber and his valet de chambre, one Olivier le Dain. This personage was not brought to trial, but his servant and friend, one Daniel de Bar, had to defend himself against an accusation which undoubtedly would have reflected shamefully upon Olivier le Dain if de Bar had been condemned. Two women of evil life, one married to a certain Colin Pannier, the other living in concubinage with a man named Janeier, accused Daniel de Bar "of having forced them and of having done and permitted upon them the violent, filthy sin of sodomy." As a consequence, Daniel de Bar was arrested and brought to trial in the criminal court by sentence of the provost of Paris; but when the case came to trial, it developed that Daniel was innocent of the actions imputed to him, while the two dissolute women who had endeavored to incriminate him, confessed that they had falsely and wickedly accused Olivier le Dain's servant. As a consequence, they were condemned by the provost of Paris to "be beaten nude and banished from the realm," and their goods "confiscated to the profit of the King, the which was executed "through the streets of Paris," on Wednesday, the 11th of March, 1477. Thanks to this decision, Olivier le Dain and his servant both escaped shameful suspicions which might have brought them to the pyre; for at this time, the sin against nature, when it was brought to trial, was punished no less severely than bestiality.

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) See Balzac, *Loyeulsetez du Roy Loys le Unziesme*.

This abominable sin was very rare in France up to the time of the expeditions into Italy, when the armies of Charles VIII and Louis XII became familiar with it. However, the courts of these two Kings were practically safeguarded by the good examples of the two monarchs, who did not appreciate love *à l'Italienne*,* according to the expression of Brantôme. Charles VIII and Louis XII possessed in the highest degree the passion for women. The Duke of Orleans, who became the wise King, Louis XII, was so debauched in his youth that he regarded neither age, face or condition, but was always ready to *faire chère lie* with the first comer; and so to him was applied the proverb, which had been put into circulation at the time of his grandfather, Louis of Orleans, brother of Charles VI: "every women ought to be forbidden to go to Orleans." Nevertheless, this Prince, whose manners were so relaxed, always refused to be pleasant or even polite toward the Regent of France, Madame de Beaujeu, who was greatly taken with him, and who did not hide from him the lively sentiment to which he always avoided responding: "if this Prince," says Brantôme, "had been willing to bend a bit to the love of Madame Anne de France, he might have had a good share in the government." But far from this, he showed himself constantly cold and disdainful toward this Princess, who displeased him greatly. At a game of rackets at which he was playing in the presence of the King and his sister who was married to the Sire de Beaujeu, the latter decided a certain doubtful play against the Duke of Orleans. The latter pretended not to hear her decision and remarked "that whoever had condemned him, if he were a man, he had lied, and if he were a woman, she was a whore." This insult, hurled in the Regent's face, turned her love to hate, and the Duke of Orleans was soon obliged to quit the court and to become an open rebel against his implacable enemy, who made him a prisoner and shut him up in the great tower of the Château de Loches.†

*On amorous relations between the French and Italians, particularly between Frenchmen and Italian women. See, always, Stendhal, *De l'Amour*, and elsewhere.

†(J. U. N.'s Note:) See Balzac's conte *Le Chateau d'Azay*.

The King Charles VIII, who died young and suddenly, as Brantôme tells us, "for having loved the women more than his little complexion could bear," was of an ardent and passionate nature. Nevertheless, when he had espoused the beautiful and virtuous Anne of Brittany, who was looked upon as the greatest prude (*la plus preude femme*) of her time, he resorted to gallantry only secretly, and the court of France, restored by the example of the young Queen, to the path of good manners, became a school of wisdom and austere virtue. On the other hand, Queen Anne had about her more ladies and demoiselles than had been seen at the court under preceding reigns; it was she "who began," Brantôme tells us, "to set up the great court of ladies, for she had a very large suite of them, both of ladies and of girls, and never refused any of them anything. . . . She caused them to be brought up wisely, and all after the model which she gave them, and they made themselves wise and virtuous." Charles VIII, nevertheless, found among these maids of honor a mistress who had enough power over him to prevent his making a second expedition into Italy. In the course of his former expeditions, which had succeeded so happily, the King of France had not lacked occasion to be faithless at once to his mistress and to his wife; all the cities through which he passed with his triumphant army offered him amorous recreations, which caused him only the embarrassment of choice and regret at his own insufficiency; when he made his entry into Milan, "the beautiful and great ladies of the country and the city," reports Brantôme, who is here merely translating the *Chronicle* of Gaguin, "appeared in the streets and principal places, and so well adorned of head and body that there had never been anything so fine to see among our French, who reflected that their own ladies in France were not so gentle nor so beautifully adorned." These too seductive sirens approached the King under pretext of presenting their children to him, and the King had but "all the more leisure and amusement in contemplating their beauty, their good graces, and the superb gentility of their accoutrements."

Charles VIII marked the various stages of his march through Italy with a number of natural children, who later were to dishonor their birth, and he would appear to have escaped a funereal encounter with the plague of Naples, which afflicted a great number of his officers and his soldiers. The plague of Naples, it is true, was not yet widespread in Italy, but the King, who gave free reign to his sensual caprices, would not have been restrained by such a fear as this; he had but one sentiment, more elevated and less egotistic, which could impose continence upon him. "The delights of Venus and the temptations of pleasure," says Simon Nanquier, in a Latin eclogue on the death of this Prince, "never caused him to depart from the path of justice." Upon his passage through the village of Ast, in retiring for the night in the chamber which had been appointed him, he found there a girl of the most marvelous beauty. Two of his domestics, "who were charged with his pleasures," according to Varilass, had chosen this girl for the King's couch. She was kneeling before an image of the Virgin and praying to it when Charles VIII entered. The King invited her gently to come to him; she obeyed trembling. She wept and groaned, and the King decided to know the cause of her grief. "I beseech you to save my honor," she cried to him. "It is a grace that I ask of you in the name of this immaculate Virgin!" Then she related that her parents had sold her to the King's valets de chambre for the use of his majesty. Charles VIII admired the great beauty of this girl, but he did not yield to temptation, reassuring the innocent victim who was at his mercy, by informing her of what he purposed to do for her. He learned that she loved a young man, who loved her also, and who was to have married her; he sent for this young man upon the spot, along with the father and mother of the girl; he demanded that the two lovers be affianced in his presence, and he himself took charge of their dowry by seeing that five hundred crowns in gold were sent to them.

Upon his return from the conquest of Naples, Charles VIII, who had had a good time there, soon came to renounce women; he did not feel in himself the strength to go on living as he had lived;

he did not even keep for himself the mistress whom he had among the maids of honor, but became as regular in his habits as a cloistered monk. The physicians advised him moderation in a case where his means were not in harmony with his desires. This tardy moderation did not prolong his life for any length of time. His cousin, the Duke of Orleans, who succeeded him as the nearest heir to the throne, had already changed his manner of life and had mastered his vagabond passions. He was enamored of Queen Anne of Brittany, and in order to be able to contract this second marriage, he undertook to have his marriage with Jeanne de France broken off, although this marriage had been consecrated by twenty-five or twenty-six years of cohabitation. He pretended, however, in the course of the sad and scandalous trial, that the said marriage had never been consummated, for the reason that the bride had been "vitiating in body" (*viciée de corps*). The pious Jeanne replied that, while recognizing that she was not "as beautiful and as well built as other women," she had, nevertheless, performed the labors and duties of marriage. The King himself underwent an interrogatory before the officials of Tours, and he declared blushing that to the best of his belief he had never made the complete use of his rights as a husband: *Neque realiter licet intus fuerit*, wrote the clerk, who endeavored to disguise as much as possible in his legal Latin the incongruity of questions and answers. And so, when the judge objected to Madame Jeanne de France that, according to the declarations of her husband, she had not conformed to the marriage state in such a manner as to produce children, the clerk wrote in his transcript: (*Quod non potuisset aut posset parere, sed nec semen virile secundum naturae congruentiam recipere, imo neque a viro intra claustra pudoris naturaliter cognosci.*) (See the *Hist. du Seizième Siècle* by Bibliophile Jacob,* Vol. I, pages 113 and following.) The tribunal demanded that Jeanne be visited by matrons with the object of determining her physical state, but this poor Princess, who has since been canonized as a saint, refused to submit to a

*Our author's pseudonym.

humiliation so painful to her modesty, and preferred to agree with good grace to a divorce. She entered a convent, and Louis XII was no sooner free than he married his dear Anne of Brittany.

Under this reign the court of France was more virtuous than it had ever been; the moral influence of Queen Anne made itself felt as had that of Queen Blanche at the court of Saint Louis. Prostitution which, by the evidence of poets and preachers, spared no class of French society, halted at the threshold of the court, or only entered there secretly and far from the vigilant eyes of the King. Louis XII did not interfere with the austere surveillance which his good wife (*tant bonne femme*) exerted over the manners of his entourage; he must have laughed up his sleeve, for he could not but remember having been a *bon raillard et joyeux compagnon*, but he did nothing contrary to the ideas and intentions of his chaste better half, and when the clerks of la Basoche and the Enfants-sans-souci dared, in their theatrical farces to mock the hypocrisy which reigned at the Queen's court, Louis XII would remark: "I wish everyone to enjoy liberty, but I also wish the young people to declare any abuses which may exist in my court, since the confessors and others who play the part of wise men, are unwilling to speak of them; provided nothing be said touching my wife, for I intend that the honor of ladies be guarded." It required nothing else than the rigidity of Anne of Brittany to restrain the prevalent disorderly manners, for the expeditions into Italy and the sojourn of the French army in the conquered countries, had resulted in bringing into France Italian habits, an immoderate taste for sensual pleasures and all the refinements of voluptuousness. As to the plague of Naples, that was the immediate consequence of the Neapolitan realm; but in the following wars, which occupied all the reign of Louis XII, this new plague, which was constantly being acquired at its source, had become so naturalized among the soldiers who had contracted it at Genoa, at Naples, at Milan and at Venice that the name of French plague was no longer contested by anyone.

Louis XII had found it difficult enough to resist the seductions of those charming Italian women, who appeared to have sworn an oath to make him unfaithful to his absent spouse; he must have succumbed more than once, and he was only preserved from dangers threatening his continence by plunging into a mystically platonic liason with the beautiful Gênoise Thomassine Spinola, whose *intendio* he was, or lover of her heart, while the nobility about him were plunging all the while into the delights of love with a blind and drunken frenzy. It is difficult to imagine the influence of the Italian women over the conquerors of Italy; the latter were vanquished and subjected in their turn?"* The contemporary historians have not neglected to give us a portrait of these enchantresses who exerted so unhappy an influence over the manners and the health of their imprudent admirers. Following is the manner in which Jean Marot, poet and valet de chambre to Anne of Brittany, pictures for us, in his poem, the *Voyage de Genes*, the ravishing spectacle which awaited the conquerors upon their entrance into the city of Milan in the year 1507:

*Lors les ouvrouers furent plains et couvers
De maincte dame, en beaulté très exquise,
La Foyre ay vene à Lyon et Anvers,
Lendit, Gibray, et autres lieux divers;
Mais onc ne viz si belle marchandise:
Chacune estoit en une cheize assise,
Levée en hault, pour leur corps montsrer mieulx.
Mais les aucuns, de leur gloire envieux,
Disoient que fard les rendoit ainsi belles;†*

*See Stendhal again, here and following.

†Then all the streets were filled with many a dame
Of beauty most exquisite, as though the Fair
Had come to Lyons or Antwerp of old fame,
To Lendit or Gibray, of renown the same;
But such fine wares were never seen elsewhere:
Here each was seated in a pretty chair,
Raised up on high, to give a better view
Of the beauties which she had to offer you;
Though some there were who said, when all was done,

*Mais quoy qu'ils dient, je croy, si m'aident dieux,
Qu'on ne sauroit mieulx repaistre ses yeulx,
Qui ne verroit choses célestielles.**

The same spectacle, which had struck with admiration the poet, accustomed to the decent and naïve graces of the French ladies, produced upon him the same effect again when, two years later, Louis XII made a second entry into Milan, where he went to put down a bloody rebellion. The fair ones of Milan undoubtedly had much to do with the pardon which the King of France accorded to the rebellious city. Jean Marot was there, and he was captivated, like the oldest captains, by the sight of the feminine triumph which eclipsed the triumph of the King:

*De dames moult frisques,
Oeuvres déïfiques,
Faces angéliques,
Ouvroyrs et boutiques
Dyaprez estoient:
La, mainctz fantastiques,
Amans lunatiques,†
Voyans telz reliques,
Soubz regardz obliques
Leurs yeulx repaissoient;
D'habits auctentiques‡*

*Their beauty solely to their paint was due:
So help me gods! I know that is not true,
And there is not their like beneath the sun.

†Cf. Shakespeare's "lunatic lover."

‡Ladies quite gay,
Goddesses at play,
And angel faces
Of many graces
Were there on view;
Fancies egad!
And lovers mad,
Looking at all the shows
With a glance that knows—
Oh, there was much to see and do!
Habits of old,

*Carcans magnifiques,
 Pierreries antiques,
 Par toutes pratiques,
 Leurs corps phalleroient;
 Puis, en leurs traficques,
 Dardoient, comme picques,
 Regards vénériques,
 Dont amantz lubriques
 Ils mortioient.**

There is room for astonishment that Queen Anne of Brittany possessed so much power and will that the contact with Italy which was corrupting France was not felt during her lifetime in the *cour des dames* which she had established at the Château de Blois, which was her ordinary residence. She had a firm faith that public manners might be bettered, and she made great efforts to restore the virtues of her sex to a place of honor. Jean Marot, who composed by her order the *Doctrinal des Dames*, is content to paraphrase the fine precepts which she taught, especially by her example. One of these precepts was "to be chaste while being beautiful" (*d'estre chaste en estant belle*). The rondeau which the poet wrote on this subject begins thus:

*Qui a ces deux, chasteté et beaulté,
 Vanter se peult qu'en toute loyauté
 Toute autre dame elle surmonte et passe,
 Veu que Beaulté oncques jour ne fust lasse†*

*Carcanets untold,
 Stones of price
 And every device
 That woman's beauty ever knew;
 Many a trick
 And subtle prick
 And many a lovelorn glance
 Their charms enhance
 And bring their lovers rue.

†Who is at once both chaste and fair
 If of all women beyond compare
 And every other lady doth excell,
 Seeing that Dame Beauty loves but too well

*De faire guerre à dame Chasteté.
Mais quant ensemble elles font unité,
C'est don divin joinct à l'humanité,
Qui rend la dame accomplie de grace,
Qui a ces deux.**

Anne of Brittany thus commends decency (*honesteté*)† in the *Doctrinal* which Jean Marot composed in eighty rondeaux,

*. . . Car c'est la perle et gemme
Que les dieux ont enchassee en noblesse;‡*

while it is *prudence* which *encontre la chair luyte* and a good deportment (*beau maintien*) which

*. . . Est la poste et vray guide
Pour monter dame au temple de vertu.§*

She invites the ladies "to set a good example to others" (*d'estre bon exemple aux autres*) "to avoid idleness" (*d'éviter oysiveté*), "to have a regard for honor" (*d'avoir esgard à l'honneur*), and finally "to love one God and one man only" (*d'aymer un Dieu et ung homme seulement*). There is to be discovered in these edifying rhymes the chaste inspiration which Anne of Brittany had communicated to her *poet in ordinaire*, and it is to be seen that she desired to make poetry, which commonly served to corrupt hearts and soften souls, serve the purposes of moral instruction in her court. Anne of Brittany cared little

*To war on Lady Chastity, but where
You find them both together, there
You find a very heavenly air,
And by her graces you can tell
The one who has them both.

†Rather a difficult word always to render in English with any precision, possessing as it does, a peculiarly Gallic shade of meaning.

‡. . . Because it is that pearl and gem
The gods have framed in nobleness.

§. . . Is the true guide
By which a lady mounts to virtue's temple.

for the commonplaces of profane love which the poets never tired of putting into their frequently licentious works; she reproached them also with employing expressions which were too free and which wounded a decent ear, for she would not suffer in a book what she would blush to hear from the mouth of the author; she thought that chastity of words should accompany chastity of action. Thus she found it difficult to pardon Sire de Grignaux, her chevalier of honor, who taught her, in place of a compliment which she desired to address to the ambassador from Spain, certain obscenities (*salaudries*) in the Spanish language, which she did not understand and which she prepared to utter in solemn audience, when the King informed her of the pleasantry which he had authorized as a laughable pastime, as Brantôme says.

It was only the death of this wise Queen which unloosed the tongues of court poets. Jean Marot, who had just composed his *Vray Disant Avocate des Dames*, in obedience to his "good lady and mistress" fell back at once into indecent poetry, and began rhyming once more on gallant and even smutty themes. In a moment, the court of France underwent a complete metamorphosis, and Prostitution once more raised its mast. Jean Marot lets us see that manners were more relaxed then than they had been before:

*Au faict d'amours beau parler n'a plus lieu,
Car, sans argent, vous parlez en hebrieu,
Et fussiez-vous le plus beau fils du monde,
Il faut foncer, ou je veux qu'on me tonde,
Si vous mettez jamais pied à l'estrieu.**

This was a result of the wars in Italy. The habits of libertinism which the soldiers had formed on the other side of the moun-

*At fine words ladies these days do boo,
For without money, you speak Hebrew,
And were you the finest, bravest lad
In all the world, money must be had,
Or they will slam the door on you.

tains followed them back into France, and the French women, without being aware of the fact and in spite of themselves, proceeded to model themselves after Italian women, who had left with the vanquishers so many delicious souvenirs. The gentlemen who had taken part in the expeditions of Charles VIII and Louis XII, did not fail, upon their return, to exalt the incomparable charms of the Italian ladies, however unfortunate (*maleficiés*) they may have been in their amours. The French women, whom their husbands and lovers appeared to be depreciating to the advantage of these dangerous sirens, had conceived toward the latter an implacable jealousy and hatred; they were pleased to set in relief the defects of their foreign rivals, insisting upon their own superiority. Following is a rondeau which Jean Marot wrote at the dictation of some beautiful lady who was desolated at seeing that a Lombardian was preferred to her:

*Pour le deduict d'amoureuse pasture,
A quelqu'un fiz l'autre jour ouverture:
Qui valloit mieulx, la Francoise ou Lombarde?
Il me respond: "La Lombarde est braguarde,
Mais froide et molle et sourde soubz monture.*

*Beau parler ont, et sobre nourriture:
Mais le surplus n'est que toute paincture,
Vour le voyez; car chascune se farde
Pour le deduict.*

*La Francoise est entière et sans rompture,
Doulce au monter, mais fière à la poincture**

*For pastime in love's pasturage,
I heard an answer very sage;
When asked if French or Lombard maid
He did prefer: "The Lombard's a jade
Who brags a lot but does not assuage.

Their words of their life are a goodly guage;
The rest in rouging find umbrage
For pastime.

But the French lass: another page.
She's fair to see in youth or age,

*Plaisir la mayne; au profit ne regarde.
 Conclusion: qui qu'en parle or brocarde,
 Francoises sont chefz d'ouvre de nature
 Pour le deduict.**

The French ladies might say and do what they liked; the men continued to run after the Italian women, who became the permanent attraction of the campaigns in Italy. The gentlemen of the court found themselves so well off on the other side of the mountains that they were in no hurry to return to France, but set themselves at Milan and in the principal cities of that Province with their mistresses, as though they cared no more for their own wives and children who remained in France. During the whole reign of Louis XII, and during the first years of the reign of Francis I, this was the custom. The poor French women were at their wit's ends to know how to overcome such seductive rivals, who deprived them thus of friends and husbands, the latter only coming home when they were ruined in health and wealth. By the time of the accession of Francis I, the fine flower of the French nobility had crossed the Alps and was scattered throughout all Lombardy; only grey beards and white hair were to be seen at the court of France; the married women might well believe themselves widows, while the young demoiselles had cause to fear they would remain virgins. They conceived a sort of conspiracy against the fair sex of Milan, and they charged the poet, Jean Marot, to write to the "Courtiers of France, being then in Italy" (*Courtisans de France estans pour lors en Italie*) a satiric epistle in which the Lombard women were compared to the French, in a manner to bring to light the virtues and merits of the one, the vices and the imperfections of the other. It was not without reason that to Jean Marot had been confided the delicate role of secretary to the "ladies of Paris;" he had himself resided in Italy long enough to become well instructed in Italian manners; he

*And no attention to profit paid.
 Then, to conclude, I am afraid,
 She holds the world in vassalage
 For pastime.

knew the strong points and the weak points of these *étranges galloises* who did so great a wrong to the loves of his own country. It was, then, not difficult for him to tell them where they stood, in the name of the ladies of Paris. He begins by accusing them of only giving themselves from interested motives, for

. . . . *Il les faut d'or et d'argent saisir,
Ains que gesir et coucher soubz leur aïse.**

It is to “get money” (*tirer argent*) that a fair Lombardian paints her face and composes her toilette; cupidity alone excites and impels them to commit that “gentle misdeed” (*doux méfait*) on which all the Gods have pity, when it is absolved by love, but which becomes a defilement when inspired by avarice;

Mais cueur françois, de son amy, prend garde,†

and love does what money cannot do. In Italy, old and young, are equally avid and traffic in their favors with the same address; sometimes the old workwomen (*vieille ouvrière*) plays the “baby doll” (*poupine*) better than the youngest “godmother.”

*Quant, en la France, une dame decline,
Elle resigne aux autres le deduict:
Se retirer est bon, quaint il est nuyct.‡*

The Lombard women have robes of cloth of gold for their public appearances, and they resemble fairies, so daintily are they coiffed (*coiffées mignonnement et à leur poste*); but under their fripperies, they are more worn and more *débiffées* than the old socks of a postilion. It is because they do not eat every day

*You must with gold and silver vouch,
If you would find asylum in their couch.

†But let the French heart of her friend take care.

‡While in France, when a dame declines,
She yields to others her amorous right,
Content to retire when it is night.

and because they do not spare their poor bodies; whereas the French women are plump and well-nourished, so that they may say with pride:

*Fermes sommes et le serons;
Tetons avons; elles, tetasses
Pendans, comme vieilles becasses
Dessus leurs jambes de herons.**

There are only fine habits to be found on the backs of these triumphant Lombardian dames; the *surplus ne vault maille*, and the gallants have not found *sous l'escaille* what they hoped for. This is not all: they are colder than a leg of lamb at Christmas time, softer than tripe, dirtier than rubbish, despite their fine trappings and ornaments. In contrast with these villainous debauchees, the ladies of Paris do not sell themselves; they only desire to know themselves for what they are worth to the ingrates who have forgotten them:

*S'aucun avoit esprit spirituel
Tant qu'il fut tel d'aviser leurs abbus,
Il congnoistroit que soubz nostre mantel
N'y a riens, fors que le vray naturel,
Et que tout bel avons tant sus que jus;
Tetins aiguz, membres blancs et charnus;
Puis, ces gros culz, pour l'amoureux affaire,
Si bien troussiez qu'il n'y a que refaire.†*

*We are plump and mean to be;
We have breasts, as you can see;
Not flabby sacks like old woodhens,
With heron-legs in marshy fens.

†If any has a mind to help him see,
He will soon be advised of their abuse,
And he will know that, under our finery,
All is but nature and no mimicry,
Since we are schooled in nature's rightful use,
With white plump limbs and pointed breasts, not loose,
And with our generous rears for amours made,
And turned so well the assault must be remade.

If the Lombardians had been willing to consent, this would have been a new judgment of Paris, provoked by the French ladies who declare clearly that to

*Juger le cas
Selon le droit,
Mettre fauldroit
Les robes bas;
Puis, sans debatz,
Pour ces esbatz,
Veoir où nature deffaudroit.**

But the Lombard women, as one may well think, do not hasten to accept the challenge, and the ladies of Paris invite the *Courtisans de France* to return without waiting for decision on the question. They address themselves in a suppliant tone to the King, Francis I, who is in no more of a hurry than are his nobility to recross the mountains:

*Vous nous tenez
Trop grant rudesse;
Amour nous presse,
Desir oppresse
Nos cueurs, de grant crainte estonnez.
Paris pleure, et Tours a destresse,†*

*To judge the case
By the law,
We'll drop our skirts
And win with awe;
Without debate,
For pleasure's state,
A finer sight you never saw.

†You men but yearn
In haste to flee;
Can you not see
How love's musketry
Peppers our hearts, and how we burn?
Paris and Tours weep as we,

*Blois languist, Amboise ne cesse
De crier: "Sire, retournez."**

Francis I and his gentlemen quitted Italy with regret, where, despite the ladies of Paris and Jean Marot, love seemed to them better than in France, and they brought back with them the Italian manners, which mingled with French manners throughout the whole of the 16th century.

*Blois and Amboise unceasingly
Languish and cry: "O Sire, return!"

CHAPTER XXXI

THE history of Prostitution at the court of France during the sixteenth century might fill an entire book, if one cared to collect all the anecdotes which tend to depict the manners of the aristocracy under the Valois; it would be necessary nearly, in order to draw an exact picture of this incredible depravation, to extract from the works of Brantôme everything which that abbot-courtier has been able to gather in the way of scandalous facts, facts which he relates in the freest fashion in the world, without appearing to suspect that he may offend the modesty of anyone. This circumstance alone would prove, better than all the tales, the degree of corruption at which French society of the time of Charles IX and Henri III had arrived; one no longer possessed then the sentiment of decency, and one felt no embarrassment at explaining, without reticence, even in the presence of the ladies, the filthiest and the most ignoble mysteries of debauchery. Thus, Brantôme, in dedicating his *Recueil des Dames Galantes* to the Duke of Alençon, "son and brother of our Kings," supplicates the latter to "fortify with his name and his authority" these *Discourses*, filled with the *bon mots et contes* which this Prince had designed to teach him "very privately" (*fort privement*) in their familiar conversation; and the first manuscript of this smutty collection, so precious nevertheless from the point of view of court history, is dedicated to Queen Marguerite, divorced wife of Henry IV, to whom the author pays homage. And yet, he did not dare to print during his own lifetime the *contes*, *histoires*, *discours et beaux mots* which he had collected "with great pain" (*avecques grande peine*); but in his will, he commanded his niece, the Comtesse de Durtal to have them printed: "I wish also," he says in this will, "that the first volume which issues from the press be given as a present, well bound and cov-

ered, to the Queen Marguerite, my very illustrious mistress, who has done me the honor to glance at some of these tales and to find them beautiful and well done."

We are forced to limit ourselves on this inexhaustible subject, and we shall endeavor merely to describe the sort of Prostitution which reigned at the court of France under each King of the Valois branch; for each of these Kings gave, by his own example and tastes, a special character to the manners of his time, and it may be said that, if the sixteenth century is entirely devoted to a monstrous debauchery which would appear to have been the end and motive of all human actions, nothing less resembles the license of the court of Henri II than the license of the court of Francis I: the one is still French, at least by intervals; the other has become entirely Italian. Under Francis I, we find here and there, amid the most shameful excesses, a few noble and pure reminiscences of the Chivalry of the Middle Ages; under Henri II, on the contrary, everything is degraded, debased, defiled, to the contempt of all religious and social laws. Brantôme has more to say than we shall have upon this sorry subject of the disorders of his contemporaries. And often, even, in citing him textually, we shall be forced to leave in his works many obscene passages which our pen refuses to transcribe.

Francis I, as one of his panegyrists whom Brantôme did not succeed in refuting on this point has remarked, was "truly great, for he had great virtues and great vices also." One of the fools of his court, Triboulet or Caillette, might have added that he was great also by reason of his nose, since the people had nicknamed him "the big-nosed King" (*le roi grand nez*). Such a nose might well have counted for something in the vices if not in the virtues, of the mighty King. This King undoubtedly possessed great and fine qualities, which were the result of his knightly character, but he was, all his life, so dominated by his passion for women that the majority of his kingly acts displayed no other impulse. Thus, according to Brantôme (see the life of the admiral Bonnivet, in the *Hommes Illustres et Grands Capitaines Francois*), the first expedition to Milan, which brought on the dis-

astrous wars in Italy, was determined by the desire of the King to see la signora Clerice, a lady of Milan, "then esteemed the most beautiful of the ladies of Italy," and by the King's desire "to sleep with her." Bonivett, who had been the lover of this lady and who desired to see her once more, knew the weakness of the King and advised the latter to cross the mountains in order to make the acquaintance of this marvel: "And that," exclaimed Brantôme, "was the principal cause of the King's crossing, which is not known to all!" This fact alone would prove that Francis I would have sacrificed his kingdom and his crown in order to satisfy a gallant caprice. He had contracted this amorous fury early in life; the *Journal* of his mother, Louise of Savoy, informs us that he was addicted to it from the age of eighteen years: "on the fourth of September, 1512, he had a malady in his secret parts," and afterwards, this malady reappeared a number of times with new symptoms and new pains, which sometimes drew from him these words, according to the report of his biographer, Mathieu: "God is punishing me for my sin!"

Brantôme relates, with a pleasant naïveté, that this was the origin of the customary residence of the ladies at the court of France. The Queen, Anne of Brittany, had previously made "her court of ladies greater than the other preceding queens," but this went for nothing at the court of Francis I, who, "considering that the ornament of the heart is ladies, desired to people his court with them more than was the ancient custom." He remarked in this connection: "A court without ladies is a garden without any beautiful flowers, and rather resembles the court of a satrap or a Turk (where one does not see any ladies whatsoever) than it does that of a great and Most Christian King." In summoning thus to his court the élite among the ladies and demoiselles, Francis I had in mind the suppression, if one is to credit Brantôme, of that dissolute and dangerous band of women whom the kings of France had kept in their suite, and whom the king of the ribalds was charged with lodging, watching and governing. We have seen, as a matter of fact, that the last king of the ribalds fulfilled the functions of his office at the beginning

of the reign of Francis I. But we have proved, by authentic documents, that he was replaced about this period by a "mistress of the daughters of joy following the court," a delicate office, traces of which remain down to Charles IX. Brantôme still insists that the *cour des dames* was destined especially, at least in intention, to replace these "daughters of joy following the court," who had become more and more redoubtable since the invasion of the venereal maladies. "It seems to me," remarks Brantôme seriously, "that public whoredom, filled as it is with syphilis, cannot be so good as the secret and discreet place where our ladies, who are very clean and healthy, may keep themselves, at least some of them, and where they need not render the gentlemen impotent like those of the bordeaux."

Thus then, according to the statements of Brantôme, this courtly Prostitution had been not only foreseen and approved by Francis I from the hygienic point of view, but also from the moral point of view, since the King remarked "that the ladies rendered the gentlemen of his court as villainous as their swords." This was not the austere and sentimental Chivalry of the fourteenth century; it was a Chivalry, equally passionate no doubt, so far as the glory of arms was concerned, but impatient to taste all the material joys and the grossest pleasures. Formerly, during the knightly ages, there had been but chaste and decent loves; at the court of Francis I all the amours were carnal, at least in intention, a point which Brantôme does not fail to excuse in his own manner: "Supposing that the ladies," he says, "do favor some (I mean any) of their lovers and servants, what blame can the King have of that, since, without using force or violence, he leaves to each one the guard of his own garrison, in which, if anyone enter, he has no power. Provided that in a frontier garrison in time of war, it is permitted to every gallant man to enter, if he can." But the startling Prostitution of the King's court did not, unhappily, stop there; it cast a sad reflection over French society and ended by devouring, like a flame, all that remained in the way of good manners among the bourgeois and popular classes. Following is the remark made to Brantôme by a great Prince,

who was not yet so corrupt as to deny the funereal consequences of this demoralization of the nobility: "If it were only," he objected, "that the ladies of the court were themselves debauched, that would be one thing; but they set such an example to the other ladies of France that the latter, fashioning their habits, their graces, their fashions and their vices upon those of the court, seem also to imitate the latter in matters of love and lechery, as though to say: 'At the court they dress thus, they dance thus, they commit lechery thus; and so we can do the same!' . . . Do you mean to say," replies Brantôme, "that before the reign of King Francis, there were no whores throughout all France, great, medium, small and common ones, and as many in their own countries and houses as elsewhere! I conclude, notwithstanding all these amours, that nothing was ever better than the introduction of the *cour des dames*, and might it please God that I were at that great King's court for my own pastime!"

Francis I, who had made of his court a sort of seraglio, in which he did not mind his gentlemen sharing with him the favors of his ladies, set those gentlemen at once an example of and a lesson in libertinism; he did not blush at becoming, at need, the accomplice of illegitimate loves, for he desired that everyone would have the same weaknesses as himself. "Under his reign," says Sauval, "if one were without a mistress, it was looked upon as bad for his court; not one had a mistress but he desired to know her name, obliging himself to speak for them, to aid them by his recommendation, and to serve them in all encounters. Finally, if he met such persons together, he had to know the remarks which were being exchanged, and if these remarks did not appear to him to be sufficiently gallant, he would teach them in what fashion they ought to converse." Thus, the King did not content himself with being a preceptor in gallantry, though, indeed, he might boast of knowing the trade well; he accepted, in the interest of his friends, the role of procurer, a role which all the courtiers were only too ready to take in order to satisfy his own pleasures. It was said of him that he would not permit a woman to keep her virtue at the court. Nevertheless, he prided

himself on being the staunchest defender of feminine honor, and he regarded as a crime the least pleasantry which appeared to offend that honor, even though it were a bit compromised already.

One day, he had the strange caprice of seeing the rutting of deer, and he led the most coquettish (*coquettes*) of his court to a spot in the forest of Saint-Germain, where the stags and the deer assembled during their amorous season. The novelty of the spectacle was calculated to offend the modesty of these ladies, if they had had any left; but they did not even change countenance, and it was possible to remark to them, smilingly, "the pastime and all the caresses of all these animals." A courtier who had been witness of the fete had the imprudence to remark that at the sight of this congress of deer, "the water had come to his mouth." The King was so enraged against the malicious author of this epigram that he exiled him from the court and never would consent to his being recalled. Another time, he became still more indignant against the young Brisambourg, whom he had charged, during the Lenten season at the château de Meudon, with the task of bearing a few platters of food from his table to that of the Duchess of Etampes and the ladies of her company, who were called the "little band"; Brisambourg permitted himself to remark: "These ladies are not content with eating meat in Lent; they also eat cooked meat and cannot get enough of it!" This remark, reported to the ladies of the "little band," excited their indignation to such a point that they complained to the king, and Francis I, beside himself with anger, ordered the untimely joker to be seized and brought to justice without any formalities. The poor Brisambourg had the good grace to flee, and he later returned to the king's favor, after having made honorable amends to the "little band" of the Duchess of Etampes. This was a period of great favor for this mistress of the King, and all the appointments among the magistrates, the officers of finance and the army were made in accordance with her choice, from among her relatives, friends and flatteries. The Duchess even boasted of being able to dispose of the papacy and the sacred college, which

were in a position to refuse her nothing; she obtained in this manner the cardinal's hat for six or eight of her preachers, and she remarked on this point, that it was no more difficult for a woman to make a cardinal than to make a cuckold.

Francis I, who appeared to be so jealous of the honor of ladies when a man dared to attack them in words, was not the least scrupulous regarding the free and indecent expressions of which the ladies themselves made use without shame. We may find a specimen of the courtly language in the smutty poems of the "royal" poets, who did not find in the technical language of Prostitution a single word, a single image, which they did not dare to employ in poetic language. There are a multitude of anecdotes related by Brantôme which bear witness to this horrible license of language and literature. Indeed, no more reserve might be expected of a depraved court which found its chief amusement in the reading of the book of Rabelais, and which sought in that book less the admirable genius of the master than it did gross equivocations and dirty jokes. And yet, it is difficult to understand how Clément Marot, valet de chambre and secretary to the beautiful Marie, Queen of Navarre, could have diverted the *sucrées* of the court by rhyming (*rythmoyant*) the disgusting loves of Alix and Martin. An encounter which Brantôme gives us as very diverting, impresses us rather as bearing the imprint of the times, and as being more characteristic than any other of the abandonment of the ladies and demoiselles of the court. Louise de Clermont-Tallard, whom Francis I called his Grenouille (frog) (Marot does not tell us why), was looked upon as the greatest wit at court;

*Car rien qu'esprit n'est la petite blonde,**

as Clément Marot said, who addresses to her a very lively epigram, declaring that this young woman was "second to none other." Brantôme also says that, from her youth, she "had done many pleasant things and uttered many *bons mots*." When Pope

*For the little blonde is nothing but wit.

Paul III, in 1528, had an interview with the King of France at Nice, Madame de Clermont-Tallard went to prostrate herself before the Holy Father and to demand of him absolution "for the sport she had had," telling him how "when Pope Clement VII came to Marseilles, she being then still Mademoiselle Tallard, had taken one of her pillows and had wiped with it her front and rear, after His Holiness had reposed on it his weary head and face and mouth which she had kissed." (See the *Dames Galantes*, Disc. VI.)

The King constantly had an official mistress, whom he preferred to all others; but one was not enough, for he insisted in giving free reign to his caprices in the midst of his tenderest and most lasting amours. It was the Duchess of Etampes who was really his favorite during a large part of his reign, but he more than once, by her side and under her eyes, set up other mistresses, who were commonly known as the "lieutenants of Madame Anne," and whom the latter did not endeavor to dethrone, certain as she was of holding her own against all the unconstancies of the King. Anne of Pisseleu, who was commonly called Mademoiselle de Heilly before she was married by the King and dowered with the Duchy of Etampes, had not begun her relations with Francis I until 1526, at the very moment when the prisoner of Pavia was leaving Spain to return to France. The Queen Regent, Louise of Savoy, preceding her son, showed the latter the gracious attention of presenting to him at Fontarablie this maid of honor whom she had destined to replace the King's ancient mistress, who had quarreled with her. This mistress, whom the demoiselle de Heilly had no difficulty in supplanting at the first interview, was the Countess of Châteaubriant, the celebrated Françoise de Foix, who was to pay with her life for her tenderness and devotion to the King. Françoise de Foix, beautiful and accomplished as she was, could not hold for long the changeful heart of her royal *mainteneur*; she loved him with too great a delicacy, which she showed clearly enough when the faithless one demanded of her the return of the jewels adorned with amorous emblems and devices which he had given her; she caused the jewels to be smelted and sent

back to nuggets, saying that she had retained the devices in her memory. The Duchess of Etampes was far from desiring to imitate this exquisitely sentimental refinement; it may be doubted even if she had a true love for the King, who felt drawn to her always by a very lively attraction, which she knew how to maintain and to revive incessantly, with an art which the cleverest of courtizans might have envied.

La belle Heilly, as Francis I for a long time called her, thus indulged in a refined and ingenious Prostitution, which served not merely to better the fortune of this adroit mistress, but also aided that of all her family and of a throng of protégés whom she constantly recommended to the King's favor. The Duchess of Etampes did not interfere in the least with the fantasies of Francis I, who was always running in quest of adventures, and who always returned to her, without her ever appearing to perceive his infidelities, although she had been on a number of occasions gravely inconvenienced in the matter of her health. She had herself cured, but the King was never cured completely. Nothing was better known at court than the liaison of the Duchess of Etampes and the King, although the latter, in order to hide the amour, imposed precautions and obstacles which only rendered their affair the more piquant. Thus, when he was in public with her, he avoided everything which might savor of familiarity; he did not depart from the most ceremonious gallantry, and when he visited her in person, he spared nothing to see that his visits remained unknown to all the world. He only came to the Duchess' apartments by means of subterranean passages and secret staircases, or else he came by night and in disguise, alone or followed by a captain of his guards. Woe to the unfortunate one who might have recognized the King and betrayed his secret! The Duchess of Etampes did not lodge ordinarily in the King's household, but opposite the royal palace or near by, in such a manner as to be the more free to communicate with her lover. Francis I gave her a lodging which bore her name and which was situated opposite the Hôtel des Tournelles, where he ordinarily sojourned; they might, in this manner, avoid frequent rendezvous at the

hôtel d'Etampes, without anyone suspecting their presence at the hôtel des Tournelles. In order to be still freer in his mysterious interviews with his mistress, the King had caused to be constructed, at the extremity of the Quai des Augustins, near the Pont Saint-Michel, a small hotel which later became the hôtel de Luynes. The Duchess of Etampes, on her part, purchased a house neighboring this one on the rear, and situated in the rue de l'Hirondelle, so that these two houses, which appeared to be independent of each other, in reality formed but a single one, and facilitated the cohabitation of the two lovers. It was to this house that the King would go to shut himself up for days at a time, under pretext of seeking repose from the fatigues of government, and the Duchess would come to him thus in hiding, when it was generally believed that she was absent from Paris, and on a voyage. We may look upon the house in the rue de l'Hirondelle as the origin of those *petites maisons* which were to become so common at Paris a few centuries later. "It would appear clearly enough," says Sauval, "that this was a palace of love, or the house of little pleasures, (*maison des menus plaisirs*) of Francis I." This house, in the time of Sauval (about 1660) still preserved a part of its interior and exterior decoration which was reminiscent of the purpose of the place; the walls were covered with sculptured ornaments, among which were to be remarked the salamander of Francis I: this fabulous emblem of his inextinguishable loves had been reproduced in all corners with a great variety of monograms and devices. There was to be seen everywhere a flaming heart* between the alpha and omega, signifying that love was the beginning and the end of all the royal acts. Some forty years later, vestiges of the sculptures and paintings were visible in this house, which the inhabitants of the quarter still traditionally called the "House of the King."

Francis I, thanks to these delicate precautions, kept up appearances so well with regard to the Duchess of Etampes, who was married to Jean de Verosse, but who did not live with

*Cf., the International Artists' Society launched in Chicago some years ago and known as "Cor Ardens."

him, that this lady might always deny boldly that she was the King's mistress. Her husband knew well enough how matters stood, for, if we are to take the account given in a certain passage of the *Dames Galantes*, which designates him without naming him, he came one night to the chamber of his wife with the intention of surprising the King and killing him; but Francis I had time to draw his sword and to threaten this importunate fellow, whom he put out of doors, enjoining him to do no evil to his wife, under pain of death; after which, "he resumed his place and reassured the lady, the best he could, for the fright which she had had." The King had frequently to employ the same "safeguards," in the interests of those ladies who gave him a good reception when he came to them suddenly in the middle of night: a fact of which the husbands were not ignorant, although the latter bore with philosophy the evil which appeared to be attached to the condition of a courtier; for at the Hôtel des Tournelles at the Louvre, and in all the royal palaces, the King had seen to it that he had the means of entering at all hours, the apartments of whatever ladies and demoiselles he pleased. There was no scandal, since the walls had neither eyes nor ears; the victims of these nocturnal ambushes were careful to see that no echoes of their shame escaped, and moreover, the King's own domestics were accustomed to see nothing, to hear nothing, to say nothing. The ladies were thus the property of the court; the King, as Sauval remarks, "has the keys of their chambers and enters there by night, at such hour as he will, without any disturbance, or making any noise." It is to be understood that the husbands, the fathers, the brothers and the lovers of these ladies were so far away that they could not hear the cries which expired in the thickness of walls and the depths of upholsteries. "When the ladies," adds Sauval, "in order to be virtuous, refuse those apartments which the King offers them at the Louvre, at the Tournelles, at Meudon, or elsewhere, it is necessary for their husbands to walk very straitly; if they happen to hold government offices, and if it is possible for them to be accused with the least derilection, it is off with their heads; there is no grace to be hoped for in their case,

at least so long as their wives do not redeem their lives at the expense of their own honor."

Such was, assuredly the most shameful form of Prostitution under the reign of Francis I, if we are to credit the statements of Sauval, who undoubtedly had under his eyes many precious documents which we no longer possess. He says expressly that nothing was commoner than this courtly Prostitution. If the ladies who had husbands, relatives or friends to save them were not beautiful and their daughters were, these latter obtained, at their own risk and peril, grace for the condemned ones. Francis I paid no attention to offers of money made to him to sign letters of remission, but if the wives and daughters of the unfortunates "came then to offer themselves, he did not fail to take them at their word, provided they possessed youth, beauty or virtue." The condemned who had saved their heads at this price were not always grateful towards their wives and daughters; sometimes they would not pardon them for such a sacrifice, from which they themselves had profited. There was much talk at this time of the grace which Francis I had accorded to the Seigneur of Saint-Vallier, when the daughter of this gentleman, the beautiful Diane of Poitiers, came to hurl herself at the King's feet, beseeching his Majesty to pardon her father, who had been condemned as an accomplice of the Constable of Bourbon. The King could refuse nothing to Diane, who also refused nothing to him. Saint-Vallier was already on the scaffold, in the Place de Grève, when Francis I suspended execution and commuted the death penalty into life imprisonment. The beneficiary had sufficient presence of mind to remark as he descended from the scaffold: "May God save the good case* (*cas*) of my daughter. (Sauval says *coq* and Brantôme something else) who has so well saved me!" This Diane of Poitiers, who had employed her beauty with so much filial respect, was, by the way, the "King's mare" (*junent du roi*), as the people had nicknamed her, according to the commentators of Rabelais; but to continue the metaphor, she soon entered the

*Literally; "match."

stables of the young Dauphin, who was to become Henri II, and who lost no time, when he ascended the throne, in making her the Duchess of Valentinois. The reign of the Duchess of Etampes thus came to an end with that of Francis I.

If Prostitution under this reign assumed an audacity at court which it had never known before, we still must recognize the fact that Francis I, by his example and his lessons, had put politeness and gallantry in the mode, as veils destined to cover the scandal of illegitimate loves. Mezeray, in his *Histoire de France*, gives us an energetic picture of that corruption which, he says, "began under the reign of Francis I, became almost universal under that of Henry II and reached its highest point under Charles IX and Henry III." But Mezeray, in pointing out the different degrees in the depravation of manners following Francis I down to the time of Henry III, has failed to remark that the first of the Valois was the implacable enemy of scandal and the obstinate protector of what he called "the honor of ladies." Francis I did not recognize or compromise any of his innumerable mistresses, and the Duchess of Etampes herself, who for more than twenty years had been the accredited favorite, might defend herself against the charge of having sold her virtue and maintain that she had been in all honor, the "friend" (*amie*) or the "sister" (*soeur d'alliance*) of the King. "Although there may have been some suspicion less honest than necessary of this relation," says Duverdier, Sieur de Vauprivas, in his *Prosopographie*, "the King himself freed it of suspicion by protesting that he only loved this lady for her grace and gaiety. However this may be, it was well known that he made use of her in his bed." The Sieur de Vauprivas, who wrote and published his *Prosopographie* at the time of Henry III does not appear to be any too convinced of the innocence of the relations between the Duchess of Etampes and the King. He undoubtedly knew that, from the death of Francis I, the Duchess' husband, whom Verillas paints for us as of an "insensible humor and little subject to the pleasures of love," had himself published his own dishonor by instituting proceedings against his wife in money matters and by provoking a judicial inquiry, the result

of which had been the establishment of the point that he had married the "King's whore" (*putain du roi*).

Francis I was not content with making a seraglio of his court, a seraglio in which neither husband nor guardian, nor father nor mother might dare to spoil or to disturb his pleasure; he amused himself also sometimes in frequenting places of ill fame (*courir le guilledou*) in the streets of Paris, in quest of adventures; he paid his addresses also to the wives and daughters of the bourgeois; but we may see, from the *Heptameron* of the Queen of Navarre, that these nocturnal recreations were not without their dangers, and on more than one occasion the King was treated like a vulgar gallant who had been surprised in the act. His sword happily came to his aid in getting him out of tight places in which his natural gaiety of heart had landed him. He did not always escape safe and sound from these hazards of love. Thus, it was an affair of this sort which gave him, according to persistent tradition, the malady of which he died after ten or twelve years of suffering, which he probably caused his mistresses to share. The historians, in preserving this tradition, which has no authentic basis, have not failed to mention the fact without vouching for the circumstances. Mezeray frequently borrows from the recitals of his contemporaries the most curious details of his *Histoire de France*; according to him, the malign ulcer, which was the cause of Francis I's death began about 1539 "to eat him away with insupportable pains, so that the pain and the infection, which were spread throughout his body, caused him a slow fever and a lassitude which rendered him incapable of any enterprise." "I have heard tell sometimes," adds Mezeray, "that he had contracted this malady from the beautiful Ferronniere, one of his mistresses, whose portrait is to be seen today in certain cabinets of curiosities, and that the husband of this woman, by a strange and stupid spirit of vengeance, had sought this infection in a bad house in order to infect the both of them." Mezeray, in his *Adrege Chronologique de l'Histoire de France*, recurs with more detail to the same facts, which he reports after a rumor which was current in the time of Francis I, as Sauval says,

although Brantôme had not spoken of La belle Ferronniere and her husband, who was an iron merchant, according to some, an advocate according to others, and pitilessly jealous according to everybody.

This adventure, which must occupy an important place in the history of Prostitution, is related very explicitly for the first time in the *Diverses Leçons* of Louis Guion (Volume II, Book I, page 109), Sieur de la Nanche. He undoubtedly had it from the mouth of some old man who had lived during the reign of Francis I, for he compiled his collection at the end of the sixteenth century; moreover, in his capacity as a physician, he may have encountered among some of his confrères a special tradition relative to the venereal malady of which the King had been the victim. "This King," he says, "sought out the wife of an advocate of Paris, very beautiful and of good grace, whom I will not name, for she has left children provided with great estates and who are folk of good renown; to whom this lady never desired to yield her favors, but on the contrary, repulsed him with many lewd words, at which the King was very saddened. Whereupon certain courtizans and royal pimps (*maquereaux*) said to the King that he might take her by authority and his royal power. And as a matter of fact, one of them went to this lady, who told her husband. The advocate saw plainly enough that there was nothing to be done except for him and his wife to leave the realm; they would have found it hard to save themselves if they had remained and had not obeyed. Finally the husband gave his wife permission to accommodate the King, and in order not to be in the way in this affair, he pretended to have business in the country for eight or ten days. However, he remained in the city of Paris, and frequented the *bordeaux* in search of the *vérole* to give to his wife, to the end that the King might be taken with it, and he soon found what he sought, and infected his wife, and she afterwards the King, who gave it to many other ladies whom he entertained, and who was never cured of it, for all the rest of his life he was unhealthy, chagrined and of an inaccessible humor." Nothing appears to us to be better substantiated than this adventure with

La belle Ferronniere so far as the unfortunate influence over the King's health is concerned; but it impresses us as being futile to attribute to the vengeance of a husband the shameful results of the King's own libertinism, since we know that the *grosse* or the *grande vérole* (one said one or the other) was then deeply rooted in the dens of public debauchery.

There is room merely for doubt as to the period at which Francis I became so gravely afflicted with the punishment of his own incontinence; for if Mezeray fixes a precise date by speaking of that "malign ulcer which came to him in the year 1539," Brantôme does not appear to hesitate in assigning to the first years of Francis I's reign the invasion of that malady which shortened his life and which won for him this famous epitaph:

*L'am mil cinq cent quarante-sept,
François mourut a Rambouillet
De la vérole qu'il avoit.**

"King Francis," says Brantôme, in the eulogy of Henri II, "also loved greatly and too much, for being young and free, he embraced now one, now another with indifference, since in those days one was not a gallant who did not carry his whorings everywhere; from which he took the *grant vérolle* which shortened his days. And he died of it at an early age, for he was but fifty-three years old, which was nothing; and he, after suffering much from this malady, was advised that if he continued his vagabond amours, he would be still worse; and like one who is wise with regard to the past, he set about to make love very gallantly. And so he set up his fine court, frequented by beautiful and decent princesses, great ladies and damoiselles, to whom he did no wrong in order to guarantee himself against villainous evils, and he no longer soiled his body with past ordures, but accommodated it to a love that was more salubrious, more genteel, clean and pure. And for his principal lady and mistress he took, after he

*In the year 1547, François died at Rambouillet of the vérole, which he had.

had come back from prison,* †Mademoiselle d'Heilly. . . ." This passage, in which Brantôme persists in giving an immoral origin to the "great court of ladies" (*grande cour des dames*) instituted by Francis I, would tend to establish the fact that La belle Ferronnière had left the King certain souvenirs before this Prince had been made a prisoner at the battle of Pavia in 1525. In another passage in his *Memoires*, Brantôme agrees with himself and confirms this assertion, falling back upon the fete of Queen Claude, by saying that "the King, her husband, gave her the *vérolle*, which shortened her days." Now the Queen Claude died in the month of July, 1524, of the "ill treatment" (*mauvais traitement*) which she had received from the King. In order to gain an accurate picture of Prostitution at the court of Francis I, it would be necessary to cite textually half of the *Dames Galantes*, and to make the acquaintance by name of the personages whom Brantôme has not dared to name, in reporting their scandalous carryings on in his book. But it would be very difficult today to lift the veil of anonymity which covers the majority of those gallantries which the discreet compiler attributes sometimes to a "great prince," sometimes to a "great princess," sometimes to a "beautiful widow," sometimes to a "*puissante dame*," whom he does not designate otherwise, undoubtedly for the reason that the good tongues of the court were on hand to beseech his silence. And so we do not believe it would be useful to assemble here those anecdotes which belong to the reign of Francis I and which show us the depravation of manners among the nobility. However, it may be remarked that, if license was general, if married women made a sport of conjugal honor, if young girls preluded their marriage by forgetting all modesty, there was still among the men, even the most debauched, an elevated and austere sentiment of what the virtue of a wife or the mother of a family ought to be. These husbands, who did not fear to defile the couch of another, looked well enough after their own, sword or dagger in

*After his imprisonment by the Emperor Charles V.

†(J. U. N.'s Note:) For the manner of this imprisonment and a description of how the King was enabled to endure the tedium of it, see Balzac's Conte, *Le Icusne De Francoys Premier*.

hand. From this resulted so many tragic stories, in which an illicit or adulterous love found an end in poison or the poignard. These bloody revenges, which threatened the misconduct of married women, were perhaps none too efficacious in keeping them in the line of duty, for Brantôme gives us to understand that this was for them but one spur the more, exciting them to brave the danger and to surpass one another in astuteness and in the art of deceiving their husbands.* “Always,” he says, after having roundly cursed out these “dangerous, bizarre, cruel, bloody and unbrageous cuckolds” who strike, torment, and slay their infamous wives, “always have I known ladies and their servants who gave little heed to the matter, for they (the husbands) were as bad as the others; and the ladies were so courageous that if courage were lacking in their servants, they would restore it, for the reason that the more perilous the enterprise the greater should be the generosity in executing it. Other such women have I also known who had no heart or ambition for attempting high things (*choses hautes*), but occupied themselves always only with their low employments (*choses basses*) and so, one says: Cowardly of heart as a whore.” (*Lasche de coeur comme une putain.*)

It is difficult to believe, in reading the *Dames Galantes* of Brantôme, that this brazen historian of courtly immodesty desired to prove in all seriousness that there was nothing blameworthy in the *grandes et honnêtes dames*. This singular paradox is to be encountered in a number of his writings, in which he loads the conscience of different persons whom he does not appear to esteem any the less. It is impossible to imagine such a justification for the bad manners of the court. Thus a Scotch lady of good family, says Brantôme, named Flammin, who had had by Henri II a natural son remarked in her “Frenchified Scotch” (*en son escocement française*): “I have done all that I could up to the happy hour when I became pregnant by the King, at which I feel myself highly honored and very happy; and I might say that the royal blood has something sweeter in it than any other, so well off

* (J. U. N.’s Note:.) “Love likes blood, Madame!” (*L’amour aime le sang, Madame!*) See Balzac’s conte, *La Connestable*, which deals with this theme.

do I find myself, without counting the good presents which I have gotten out of it." To this "Frenchified Scotch" Brantôme adds in the form of a commentary: "This lady, with others of whom I have heard tell, were of this opinion, that to sleep with the King was not a point of infamy and that whores are those who give themselves to the small but not to great kings and gentlemen." Brantôme puts the same words into the mouth of a "great one" (*grand*) who discourses "on this same subject" (*de ce même propos*), in defense of a great princess who was very ardent in "satisfying the world" (*contenter le monde*), like the sun, "which scatters its light and its rays on everyone." He declares that these inconstancies are a fine thing and permissible in great ladies, "but not to other common ladies, of the court, the city or the country . . . and such ladies of middle station," he adds with assurance, "must be constant and firm like fixed stars and in no wise erratic; that when they become changeable, wander and vary in love, they are justly punishable, and they ought to be treated like whores of the bordeaux, since their beauty, while passable, is not one to be shed over a number." After this ingenious theory, we should not be astonished if a lady of the court, who was certainly a great dame, found herself envying the "liberty" of the courtezans of Venice:

"Ah! my God!" she remarked to one of her companions, "would that we might transfer all our property there by letter of the bank and that we might go there to set up that courtesan's life, pleasant and happy, to which none other can approach!" Brantôme, who reports this, does not refrain from exclaiming: "There is a pleasant wish and a good one!" but it is easy to see that he approves it in so great a lady.

Certainly, the famous Roman courtesan, called La Grecque, who came to France, according to Brantôme, to "train" the husbands there and to give lessons to their wives, might have addressed to the latter, without any scandal, this indecent language: "Our master is so warm when he is well taught that one takes a hundred times more pleasure in practicing with a number than with one." It was not merely the graduate courtezans who pro-

fessed debauchery at the court of Francis I; but great ladies, great princesses, and princes of the Church also indulged in it at will; the Cardinal of Lorraine, who was the King's "good second" in affairs of gallantry, took upon himself the task of "training with his own hand," the new girls and ladies who arrived at the court. "What a trainer!" cries Brantôme, "I do not believe his task was so hard a one as training a wild colt." Then, after having vaunted the wisdom of the Cardinal *a l'endroit des dames*, he confesses that "few or none of them came out of that court good wives and girls!"

CHAPTER XXXII

IF THE seraglio of Henri II," says Sauval, "was not so large as that of Francis I, his court was none the less corrupt." The *Mémoires* of Brantôme are there to confirm this corruption, which could have been carried to no higher a degree; for the court of France at this period had adopted and naturalized all species of Prostitution and debauchery, all the refinements of lust and gallantry, all the lessons of moral depravation which it previously had learned at the Italian courts. Brantôme applauds what he regards as a triumph and an amelioration in the interests of the sensual pleasures: "As to our beautiful French women," he says in the first discourse of his *Dames Galantes*, "we have seen them in times past very gross and content to conduct themselves in gross fashion; but for the last fifty years, they have borrowed and learned from other nations so much gentleness, so many endearments, attractions and virtues, so many habits, pretty graces and lascivious ways, for they themselves have so well studied how to fashion these things, that now it must be said that they surpass all the others in all fashions, and thus, as I have heard say, even among strangers, they are now worth more than the others, beyond the fact that the words of lechery in French are more prurient in the mouth, better sounding and more moving than the others." Brantôme concludes from this that it is better to make love in France than elsewhere, and so he betakes himself to the "doctors in love" (*docteurs de amours*) and to the courtezans, who assuredly give the palm to the French ladies, although forced to recognize in the last analysis that, "there are whores everywhere and cuckolds everywhere, and chastity does not inhabit one region more than another."

Henri II, nevertheless, had less share than had Francis I in the depravation of his time, for if he "loved like the King, his

father and other kings and was greatly given to ladies," as Brantôme says, he still set his courtiers a rare example of constancy and perfect love in his liaison with Diane of Poitiers, who was his one official mistress throughout the course of his reign. Diane was no longer young, but she was always beautiful, and Brantôme, who saw her at the age of seventy years, six months before her death, was struck with admiration at finding her "as beautiful of face, as fresh and as amiable as at the age of thirty years." He adds that "she had especially a very white skin and that without powdering herself at all," which led him to think that she must have made use of certain *bouillons composés d'or potable*. However this may be, Henri II loved her passionately, so passionately that he could not do without her and he was sad when she was out of his sight, and so she continued to live with him as "privately" as though she had been his legitimate wife and the Queen was obliged to bear in silence the supremacy of her rival, who always avoided making her feel her humiliation. Henry II still cohabited with Queen Catherine, who appeared to have no other role than that of bringing into the world a great line of princes and princesses. Diane on her side, did not appear to be jealous of this prolific virtue, the result of which frequently was the prolonged absence of the King from the conjugal couch during the Queen's pregnancy; at such times, Diane was truly the only Queen at court, and remained so until Catherine de Medici had left her child-bed. She took an active part in the affairs of government, and it may be said that her influence was by no means an unfortunate one in politics for the reign of Henri II. "Happy is that king," exclaims Brantôme, "who meets a good mistress, perfect and well accomplished, as it is in his power well to choose, for, she being such, both he and his realm are none the worse off for it!"

But without accusing Diane of Poitiers of having exerted a pernicious influence over the manners of the court, it may be noted that she did nothing to make them better, either by her example or by her influence over Henri II. She undoubtedly was quite content with the unbridled license which reigned at court and which seemed ever to be making new progress, since it tended to

justify in the eyes of all her adulterous commerce with the King; she might even, up to a certain point, justify her own conduct by comparing it with the prodigious disorders in which the greatest ladies about her permitted themselves to indulge, displaying thus a contempt for their own birth and rank. Henri II, whose love did not fail in point of delicacy so far as his favorite was concerned, spared no pains in preserving the brilliancy of this amour and in rendering it, in a manner, respectable, by surrounding it with respect and homage. That was why he had put up everywhere, in the ornaments of the palace, at the Louvre, at Fontainebleau, at Madrid and elsewhere, the figure of Diané interlaced with his own with the arms and devices of this goddess whom he adored. These evidences of an enthusiastic tenderness and admiration were to be seen not merely in the interior decorations of the royal apartments, including those of the Queen, but also on the facades of public edifices, in the sculptures of windows and cornices, in the scrolls of locksmith work, in the panelings of doors and in the mosaics of court pavement. A point was made of displaying to all glances these anagrams made from the names of Diané and Henri. Never had adultery and Prostitution been given such an apotheosis.

The object which the King proposed was accomplished and even surpassed; not only was the court accustomed to confuse the mistress with the King, but even the people were not far from looking on Madame Diane as a sort of magician who owed to her art the fact that she kept always young and beautiful, and one whose symbol presided over the destinies of France. Henri had become so established in this concubinage that he appeared to be proud of it, so that he did not even fear to be seen in public on horseback, with the Duchess of Valentinois in front of him, with his arms fast about her. It might be said, however, that fashion authorized this variety of mount. We do not know whether it was Diane or Henri II who commanded the manufacture of an enamel representing the two lovers on horseback. Neither do we know whether the order to multiply the emblems of Diane on the royal battlements came from the favorite or from

her lover. It has been thought, with some appearance of reason, that the artists, architects, sculptors, painters and others, perceiving the passion of Henri for this lady, had thought to flatter the sovereign by means of an allegory immortalizing his amour. The Italian artists undoubtedly took the initiative in this flattery, which pleased Diane and which did not displease the King; the French artists did not fail to follow suit, imitating what their rivals had so successfully done, and this became from then on a general habit in all works of art which belonged to this reign, the initials of Henri and Diane being reproduced with the crescent and the device: *Donec totum impleat orbem*. Was this an allusion, as has been said, to the desire and hope which the King had of seeing his mistress's belly become rounded out?

Henri II, following the example of his father, was always very discreet regarding the honor of ladies; "He would not have it," says Brantôme, "that the ladies should be scandalized or divulged, so that he himself, who was of a sufficiently amorous complexion, when he went off to see the ladies, went there in the most hidden and secret manner possible, in order that they might be beyond all suspicion and ill fame." But it is possible that the King did not take sufficient precautions to prevent the echoes of his infidelities from reaching the ears of Diane of Poitiers, who, on her side, took care that her own were not discovered. Brantôme says confidently that this lady, when she was in high favor, had "obliged so many persons in the matter of pleasures," that it might be said she was "*grande en tout*." Henri II did nothing but laugh, as though he felt no jealousy, for he knew that Diane had lovers but that he had no rival. One day, if we are to believe Brantôme and Sauval, the Duchess of Valentinois and the Marechal de Brissac were together, when the King knocked at the door of the chamber. The door was not opened until Brissac had been hidden under the bed. The King went to bed and invited Diane to do the same, but he soon complained of hunger and arose. Diane, trembling all over, brought him comfitures; he ate them, and then of a sudden, he threw the box under the bed, saying: "Take them, Brissac! everybody must live." He

left at once and never spoke of this adventure again to Diane or to the Marechal de Brissac, who at the moment had feared for his life. In a similar circumstance, Francis I had been less courteous with regard to the Admiral Bonnivet. The latter did not wait for the King, when Francis I came to his mistress' room while she was shut up with Bonnivet. The gallant merely had time to hide himself under the leaves which filled the chimney. Francis I took his place in the bed and appeared not to suspect the presence of a third party. Then he arose, under pretense of having to satisfy a need of nature, and went directly to the chimney, where he flooded with urine his poor rival, who did not dare to cry for mercy. But as soon as the King had left, the lady gave a white shirt to her lover, perfumed his hair and beard, and did her best to make him forget his misadventure.

It would be necessary to cite a large part of the *Dames Galantes* of Brantôme, in order to describe by means of anecdotes that Prostitution which dishonored the court of Henri II. This Prostitution appears to us so horrible and so monstrous that we should readily tax the licentious narrator with hyperbole, if he appeared to be highly indignant at the turpitudes which he relates; but there are in his recitals so much naïveté and good humor that we are forced to recognize the fact that even the most abominable depravations were unable to astonish him or to make him blush. "While widows and wives were making love with extravagance," says Sauval, who repeats the stories of Brantôme with as much decency as the subject permits, "the young girls were doing the same. All this was done with a brazen face and the absence of all shame. As for the scrupulous, a number of them married the first comers, in order to be able to divert themselves afterward, without fear, with whomsoever seemed good to them." Brantôme gives us to understand that in a majority of court marriages, the brides did not come as virgins to the nuptial couch and that nearly all the husbands learned that their wives had "been in the beds of some kings, princes, seigneurs, gentlemen and many others." But these were but mere peccadilloes beside the incests which, according to him, were common enough in noble families, where

the father naturally did not marry off his daughter until he had dishonored her: "I have heard tell," he says, in the most tranquil fashion in the world, "of many other fathers, and especially of one very great who had no more conscience where their daughters were concerned than had the cocks in the fable of Aesop." After such infamies, which Brantôme was unable to report without horror and without disgust, one is tempted to see nothing but an innocent maiden in that "very beautiful and honest damoiselle" who remarked to her servant: "Wait a little until I am married, and you shall see, under that marriage curtain which hides everything, how well off we shall be!"

"As to the brazen ones," says Sauval, "some soiled themselves with pleasures before their marriage, while others had the address to divert themselves in the presence of their governesses and even their mothers without being perceived; then, to conceal the mystery, they would have recourse to execrable means; others (and this was very common among the young girls and the widows) made use of certain little trinkets such as the four which Catherine de Medici found in the strong box of one of her maids of honor." It was the Italy of the Borgias and de Medici which had taught to France all these practices, the use of all these instruments of and stimulants to Prostitution; it was the court which always had a hand in these obscene sports; it was always it which, ardently eager to make use of these impure innovations, accredited them and popularized them throughout the nation, where there soon remained nothing of the old Gallic candor.

It must be remarked with regret that the arts, which should have for object the impassioning of souls by means of all that is noble and pure, were first among the corrupters, or at least among the auxiliaries of this general Prostitution. Francis I and Henry II summoned to their court a throng of Italian artists of great talent, but of dissolute manners; the sculptors carved "statues of bronze and of marble, of men as well as of women, of gods and goddesses, in which lubricity triumphed;" the painters filled "the apartments of our kings with paintings and with pictures in which were represented things not only lascivious but incentuous

and execrable.” Leonardo da Vinci, Benvenuto Cellini, Primaticcio, Nicolo dell’ Abbate, Rosso and their pupils were no more reserved in France than they had been in their own country, where the brush and the chisel appeared to be accomplices of all the distractions of the senses. The greatest artists of the Renaissance submitted to the depraved tastes of their contemporaries, and there was in them a deplorable emulation in the matter of immodest genius. Greek and Roman Priapi were scattered everywhere under all forms, with so much audacity that it seemed France herself had become pagan and that her women were no longer able to blush.

The châteaux and the palaces of the kings, the houses of pleasure of the princes and the princesses, the dwellings of lords and individual homes were invaded by indecent pictures and frescoes. “To give a small sketch of some of these paintings,” says Sauval, who may have seen them with his own eyes, “here are men and gods, wholly naked, dancing and doing something still worse with women and with goddesses who are also wholly naked. There, some are exposing to the eyes of their gallants that which nature has taken so much pains to hide. Others are debasing themselves with eagles, swans, ostriches and bulls. In many places are to be seen Ganymedes, Sapphos and *belettes*; there are gods and men, women and goddesses, who outrage nature, and plunge into the most outrageous dissoluteness. After this, there is no room for astonishment at the incests and abomination which followed under the reigns of Charles IX and Henri IV. Sauval adds that at Fontainebleau the chambers, the halls and the galleries were all filled with these erotic paintings, and that Queen Anne of Austria had them burned for more than a hundred crowns when she became Regent in 1643.

The same subjects were also represented in bas-relief in the apartments and embossed in the gardens of the royal houses; they were to be found also in the tapestries and in the furniture of all sorts. Brantôme in his *Dame Galantes*, devotes a number of pages very diverting undoubtedly, to relating “the discourses, the thoughts, the manners and the words,” of the ladies and girls of

the court, who were in the habit of drinking from a silver beaker chased in gold and adorned with obscene figures. This beaker, which was a veritable curiosity in those days, belonged to a Prince, who found amusement in putting it into the hands of guests at his table. It was, moreover, an artistic masterpiece and a "*grand speciaute*," according to Brantôme, "the most elaborate, engraved and sigillated, which it was possible to see; on it had been engraved, gently and subtly, by the burin, a number of the Figures of Aretino, of men and women, and at the bottom of the cup and above in high places also, the divers manners of cohabitation among the beasts."* The remarks of the fair drinkers, which Brantôme reports at length, are not without their value in showing us the effrontery of the ladies of the court: "Some would say, when asked what there was to laugh at, and what they had seen, that they had seen nothing but paintings, and that, for that matter, they would not mind drinking another time; while others would say: 'As for me, I do not think of evil; paintings and what the eye sees do not soil the soul.'† Others would say: 'The wine is as good as any other.' Others would affirm that it was as good a beaker to drink out of as any other, and that it satisfied the thirst as well as any other; some were criticised for opening their eyes as they drank; they would reply that they desired to see what they were drinking, fearing that it was not wine, but some medicine or poison. Others being asked whether they took greater pleasure in seeing or in drinking, would reply: 'In both.' Some would say: 'What beautiful grotesques!' Others: 'What pleasant mummeries!' Some would say: 'Look at the pretty pictures!' Others: 'What pretty mirrors!' " Brantôme is here evidently endeavoring to imitate those *propos des duveurs* which fill one of the most joyous chapters of the *Gargantua* of Rabelais.

We may judge from this anecdote that the Figures of Aretino were not less known in France than they were in Italy. It is even

*Each of Raimondi's designs represented a different *modus sexualis*, and Aretino, as he himself tells us, wrote his sonnets as a commentary on the engravings. Cf. Aretino's remark: "The beasts are more free than we!"

†The old problem of morals and aesthetics, which has always been especially fought out in the field of painting.

likely enough that the original plates of these Figures, which enjoyed so sorry a fame, had been secretly brought to Paris after the reign of Francis I,* and that they had remained there until the seventeenth century, when they were destroyed by a print merchant. It is known that the series of sixteen obscene figures, which had been engraved at Bologna by the famous Marcantonio Raimondi from the designs of Julio Romano had appeared accompanied by sixteen infamous Italian sonnets from the hands of Pietro Aretino, under the title, *De omnibus Veneris schematibus*; whereupon Pope Clement VII had caused the engraver to be arrested and put in prison, Raimondi, indeed, coming near being hanged or burned alive; but Pietro de Medici saved his life, at the solicitation of Aretino, whom the Holy Father did not dare prosecute, and who was moreover, in a place of security† at Venice. As to the painter, he would have been compromised in the proceedings if he had not fled to Mantua, where he waited for the Pope to pardon him. Only a small number of the engravings had been struck off, and they were disputed by the great lords of Rome, and even by a number of the cardinals but the copper plates had disappeared and papal justice was unable to come at them. They were later brought to France, it would seem, and there many successive copies were made, which however, were barely enough in number to satisfy the unbridled libertinism of the sixteenth century, but which happily have disappeared entirely, for the destiny of such abominable works as these is not to survive the person who possesses them. That is why the existence of the original engravings has been so often debated and doubted; but the evidence of Brantôme appears to confirm the matter: "I have known," he says, "a good Venetian book seller at Paris, who was called Messer Bernardo, parent of the great Alsus Manucius of Venice, who kept shop in the rue de Saint-Jacques, who told me and swore to me once that in less than a year he had sold more

*Francis I was himself a good friend of Aretino. It was he who gave Pietro his famous chain of gold. He also endeavored to inveigle Aretino into coming to the French court to reside, but Aretino, after due deliberation, declined.

†His "*roica siciua*." See Aretino's letters, passim, et alib.

than fifty sets of the works of Aretino to married and unmarried people, and to women, of whom he named to me three who are great in the world, whom I shall not name, and he sent those works to them very well bound under solemn oath that not a word was to be said about the matter.*

It is, at least, very probable that this Messer Bernardo (Bernardino Torresano or Turizan) possessed, about 1580, the original plates of Marcantonio, and that he had come into them through Manucius, for the copper plates, which the papal police had not been able to discover when the engraver was on trial, had certainly been sent to Venice, where the publication of the most infamous books and engravings met with no judicial opposition, so great was the liberty,[†] or rather the license of manners in that city. The son of the great Aldus Manucius printed and published without repugnance the execrable writings of his friend, Pietro Aretino; it was undoubtedly they who prepared an Italian edition of the *De Variis Veneris Schematibus*; but all the copies of this edition had disappeared a long time since, burned by families after the death of those who had possessed the works, or destroyed by public order. As to copies of the French edition of Turizan, although they were more numerous than the others, the majority of them have also perished in the hands of those who made use of them. The severity of the rules governing book shops in France during the seventeenth century, undoubtedly prevented a new edition of the original engravings, and they remained hidden in the depths of some old storehouse of pictures. For if the publication of obscene works under cover was frequent at this epoch, the Figures of Aretino were too well known to the magistrates, for a book seller to dare to dispose of examples of them.

And yet, it would appear that an anonymous hand had added four plates to the sixteen that Marcantonio had engraved from

*This is what, in the *Introduction* to my Aretino, I have referred to as the "conspiracy of shush" against Pietro. During his lifetime, Aretino was one of the most powerful men in the world, but the moment he had died, he became, De Sanctis tells us, "a name that was not mentioned in the presence of a lady." The ban has remained.

†See Aretino's letters.

the paintings of Julio Romano. It may be supposed that these four new plates had been made after the designs of the same painter, and perhaps the same engraver, for in a letter of the 29th of November, 1527, Pietro Aretino sends to the signor Cesare Fregoso: *Il libro de i sonetti e de le figure lussuriose*. Now there are more than sixteen sonnets, which means that there were more than sixteen Figures. The original number of the Figures and the sonnets was sixteen, but this number grew, and always under the inspiration of Aretino, who, in his brazen pride, was ambitious to surpass the ancient debauchees, since the book of *Elephantis* contains only nine Figures, as Martial informs us (*Sunt Illic Veneris Novem Figuræ*. Epigr. 43 of the VIIth book). Aretino did not stop there, and the number of Figures had been raised to thirty-five;* he himself tells us so in his famous dialogue, *La Putana Errante*,† in which he treats doctorally *de i diversi conguinimenti*. After the time of Aretino, his work had been completed by the edition of a thirty-sixth and last figure, and the collection thus augmented was vulgarly known under the title of the "Thirty-six Manners of Aretino" (*Trente-six Manières del Arétin*). Nevertheless, the learned Gross de Boze, who, altogether an acedemician as he was, has included in the great Catalogue of his fine library *la Corona de i cazzi*, either because he possessed this counterfeit of the original work or because he had the hope of procuring it, does not mention more than twenty-three sonnets, and consequently, twenty-three Figures.

There were but twenty when they fell under the eyes of Felibien and when the print merchant Jollain, broke the plates a short time afterward. Vasari, in his *Lives of the Painters*, also had spoken of but twenty figures. Chevellier tells us (*Origine de*

*The work of Zoppino as scholarship as shown, not of Aretino.

†There has been, as our author goes on to indicate, much dispute about the exact number of original Figures and Sonnets. The original number, undoubtedly, was sixteen. See Edward Hutton "Pietro Aretino, the Scourge of Princes, London, Constable and Company, 1922," p. 253. J. U. N. adds: I take issue with Putnam in this. Romano's original twelve paintings were copies of those twelve masterpieces which decorated the walls of the Golden House of Nero. (See Fuchs.) They represented the twelve classical "attitudes" and were in a way, symbolical of the twelve labors of Hercules.

l'Imprimerie de Paris, page 224) that the honest Jollain, knowing where these infamous plates were to be found, bought them for a hundred crowns, "with the design of destroying them," and that he did destroy them as a matter of fact, without drawing from them a single proof. "He always believed," adds Chevellier, "that it was the original plates, engraved by Marcantonio, which he had destroyed." There is room for astonishment that this collection, which was not rare in the time of Brantôme, since a book shop in Paris did not hesitate to sell fifty copies in less than a year, was of a sudden not to be found. Following, in our opinion, is the cause of the total disappearance of those copies which were in circulation in the sixteenth century, in France and in Italy. As soon as a man was in danger of death, word was sent to a priest, who came to assist the dying man and receive his confession and administer the last sacrament. Now the priest, by virtue of his ecclesiastic powers, would call upon the dying man to give up all the impious, heretical or obscene books which he might possess. They were either burned or else the confessor took them away with him to destroy them himself. It is easy to understand how these books, in case the priest preserved them for himself, could not have survived their possessor. A warfare on forbidden books* had been launched by the Catholic clergy from the beginning of the Reformation, which attacked, especially by means of books, the Mass and the pope. There was throughout all Catholicism a secret password to which confessors in *extremis* have conformed down to our day. The result has been that the heterodox writings of Calvin, among others his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, have become almost as rare as the scandalous Figures of Aretino.

Brantôme indulges in a theological digression the subject of these Figures, and he proves that the Breton friar, Jean Benedicti, who wrote about this time his dogmatic and confessional work, knew them equally well. It is known that this book, translated and printed in French at Lyons in 1581, under the title, *La*

*The well known *Index Expurgatorius*.

Somme des Péchés et le Remède d'Iceux, was not less filled with ordures than the celebrated work in the chapter of lust which he here appears to be reviewing. Brantôme, in saying that the friar, Benedicti, "has very well written of all the sins and shown that he has seen and read much," does not appear to be any more scandalized at this *Somme* than at the Aretino Figures. "All these forms and postures," he says, "are odious to God, so odious that *Saint Hieronymus* has said: 'Whoever shows himself too disorderly amorous of his wife is an adulterous and sinful husband.'" And since certain ecclesiastical doctors have spoken of it, I shall say the thing briefly in Latin words, all the more because they themselves have not cared to say it in French: *Excessus*, they say, *conjugum fit, quando uxor cognoscitur ante retro, stando, sedendo a latere, et mulier super virum.*" The treatise of Benedicti, at the time it appeared, had for object the enlightening of young confessors on certain sins,* which were new in the old catalogue of cases of conscience but which came up daily before the tribunal of penitence.

The civil authority winked at those plastic obscenities which might with impunity be executed, sold, possessed, and even exposed to the view of all; we do not see, in the sixteenth century in France, a single painter or engraver of erotic subjects being punished, whereas Pope Sixtus V, according to Brantôme, caused to be hanged a secretary of the Cardinal d'Este, named Capella, who had represented "from the life" (*au vif*) and had painted *an naturel* the amours of a great man and a beautiful lady of Rome.† The obscene painters ran less risks at the court of France. Brantôme cites one, always without naming him, who had done a good deal worse than Capella in the time of Henri I:

*The problem has always been a thorny one for the Church.

†Hanging for writing or publishing an obscene work was no unusual punishment. Nicolo Franco, Aretino's secretary and later his bitter enemy, was finally hanged by order of Pope Pius V (St. Pius) for publishing the *Priapeia*. Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

"I must needs teach her the whole book of verse; line by line the two-and-thirty sonnets of Pietro Aretino."—The Pleasant Memoirs of the Marquis de Bradomin, translation by May Heywood Broun and Thomas Walsh, Harcourt Brace and Company, New York, 1924.

"A gentleman whom I have heard named and whom I have known, made one day a present to his mistress of a book of paintings, in which there were thirty-two ladies, great ones of the court, painted *au naturel*, couched and playing with their servants, painted in the same fashion and *au naïf*. Some there were who had two or three servants, some more, some less. And these thirty-two ladies represented more than twenty-seven Figures of Aretino, all diverse. The personages were so well represented and *au naturel*, that it seemed they were talking and acting: some unclad and naked, the others clad, with the same robes, coiffures, adornments and vestments that they commoly wore and in which one sometimes saw them. The men were the same. In brief, this book was so curiously painted and done that there remained nothing to say of it except that it cost from eight to nine hundred crowns and was all illuminated." Brantôme relates that the sight of this book of images produced dangerous effects upon the women who amused themselves by looking at it; he cites one who "was so ravished and entered into such an ecstasy of love and of ardent desire," that she was unable to look beyond the fourth one and fell in a swoon at the fifth. We should like to believe, for the honor of these ladies, that it was shame that produced this fainting fit.

In another passage in the *Dames Galantes*, Brantôme speaks once more of these lubricious paintings, which had commenced to be in vogue under Francis I: "Such paintings and pictures," he says, with more reason and decency than he commonly shows, "possess more nuance for a fragile soul than one might think." The Count of Châteauvillain had in his gallery, among the rare and beautiful pictures which composed it, one of these libidinous paintings, "where were represented very beautiful ladies naked at the bath,* touching, feeling, handling and rubbing each other, mingled together and groping† each other and, what is

*A favorite theme in painting and one, probably, definitely immortalized by Renoir.

†The modern sexual invert of the street type employs this word in precisely the same sense.

more, doing their hair so gently and so properly, making a show of everything, that the coldest of recluses or of hermits would have been warmed and greatly moved." A great lady of the court who visited the gallery and who had paused before this picture, remarked to her lover: "It is too close here! Let us go to the coach at once and go to my lodgings, for I cannot contain this ardor; it must be extinguished; it is too burning!" It was the husbands who were to be accused of the Prostitution of their wives, for they spared nothing in corrupting the latter. "Some of them," says Brantôme, "whore more with their wives than do the ruffians with the putains of the bordeaux." They did not blush to introduce into their own households, these books, these prints, these obscene paintings, which tended to make of the purest wife a shameless courtesan and which offered energetic stimulants to adultery." "Today," wrote Brantôme, at the end of the reign of Henri III, "there is no longer need of these books or these paintings, for their husbands teach them enough, that is the sort of school these husbands keep!" It is certain that only too often the husbands themselves, in the guise of a *livre d'heures*, would give their wives the book of Aretino *en figures*. Brantôme cites a lady, *belle et honnête*, who had one in her library; a gentleman, who was in love with her, no sooner learned of this circumstance that he at once agured favorably the success of his amour, and, in short, "he had his way with her and found in her what she had learned in the way of good lessons and practices."

What more could be added, by way of making clear the frightful libertinism of an epoch, in which the conjugal couch had even lost its veils of modesty? It was at this epoch, nevertheless, that many scrupulous men, who belong, it is true, to the middle classes of society, were effacing from or cutting out of their books, every filthy and indecent passage doing away with indecent engravings or covering their nudity with ink; this is why we have so many incomplete or mutilated volumes, bearing witness to the chaste and virtuous censorship of their ancient readers or owners.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE reign of Catherine de Medici, that is to say those of her three sons, Francis II, Charles IX and Henri III, who were Kings in turn under her tutelage and regancy, this long reign, filled with civil wars, religious troubles and bloody massacres, introduces us to a new phase in the history of Prostitution. Catherine de Medici conceived the idea of applying Prostitution to politics; she made of it an arm to conquer her enemies; she made use of it as a narcotic to put them to sleep, as a chain to enslave them and as a poison to destroy them. Never perhaps had immorality had recourse to such refinements; never had the art of governing men stooped to the employment of means so shameful. Machiavelli himself would have blushed at erecting into a permanent system what had been until then but a very exceptional accident in politics. The women, it is true, in certain cases, had exercised a notable influence in the affairs of State; they had undoubtedly, in all times, caused to be felt about them the empire of their seductiveness, but it was Catherine de Medici who, for the first time, at least at the court of France, had her maids of honor trained and well taught to become at need, the impure instruments of her political designs.

The general corruption of the court at this period is a fact which it would be futile to attempt to prove by means of examples; this corruption, to which Catherine de Medici had not personally contributed, was not, as Bayle says (*Oeuvres*, Volume II, page 17), an effect of the political policy of this Queen, for her husband, Henri II, had left her nothing to do in this regard, but she made use of it to the profit of her own Machiavellian policy. "Before this reign," says Mezeray, in his *Abrege Chronologique de l'Histoire de France*, "it was the men who by their examples and by their persuasion, seduced the women into gallantry; but

after amours (*amourettes*) had come to form the greater part of the intrigues and mysteries of State, it was the women who preceded the men in this particular." Here we have a certain change in gallant strategy, which Catherine de Medici very cleverly taught to the ladies and demoiselles who composed her court, and who formed a band (*bande*), which was then called "the Flying Squadron of the Queen" (*l'escadron volant de la reine*). Catherine, during the lifetime of her husband, had become instructed in these new tactics when, having no children as yet and fearing to be repudiated, she had won over (*gagné*), in the words of Henri Estienne, the beautiful Diane of Poitiers, "so that the latter might keep her in grace with Monsieur le Dauphin, her husband, and she did not shame to play the part of a macquerelle in order to arrive at her intention." (See *Disc. Merveilleux de la Vie, Actions et Déportements de Cath. de Médicis*.)

We are lacking in precise information on the subject of this famous Flying Squadron, which we only know through some of its exploits. But all the historians are agreed in admitting its existence, if not its erotic organization, and Brantôme who is more discreet than ordinarily upon this delicate point, says enough to enable us to appreciate all the service which the Queen's maids of honor were in a position to render her political policy. "A famous prelate of our court assures us," says Sauval, "that Catherine de Medici had a seraglio of coquettes, whom she carried with her, like a lot of firebrands, to snatch from the hearts of princes and seigneurs of the realm their most secret thoughts, and that these were well enough able to corrupt the chiefs of the party in 1579, and above all Henri IV, and that they by their cajolery seduced the leaders of Religion into a new civil war, which was called the 'War of the Amorous' (*Guerre des amoureux*)." The "famous prelate" whom Sauval cites is none other than Brantôme, who had certainly related the prowess of the Flying Squadron, in those *Memoirs* of his, which we no longer possess. Those which we do possess, contain, undoubtedly, many anecdotes relative to the *dames et filles* whom Catherine had enrolled in this am-

orous militia; but he excuses himself for not naming the heroines of the good tales which he has collected in his *Dames Galantes*: "I speak of some," he says, "of whom I hope to make good tales in this book before I am done, but the whole so modestly and without scandal that one shall perceive nothing, for the whole shall be covered under the curtain of silence surrounding their names, and if any of these shall themselves read these tales, let them not be put out, for amorous pleasure cannot endure forever, on account of many inconveniences, preventions and changes, but at least the memory of an ancient past can still content us."

Brantôme, however, does not commit the fault of giving, in his *Dames Illustres*, the list of ladies and damoiselles, who, in his opinion, cast so much éclat on the court of the Queen mother; he addresses them collectively in eulogies capable of making any blush who might have preserved a remnant of modesty. "All this company which I have named," he says, "need not reproach themselves with any loss of their time, for all beauty is here abundant, all majesty, all gentleness, all good grace, and very happy is he who might have been touched with the love of such ladies, and very happy also he who might have escaped (*escapar*). And I swear to you that I have not named any of these ladies and demoiselles who were not very beautiful, agreeable, and well accomplished, and all well equipped to set fire to all the world. Thus, when they were in their prime, they have burned up a good part of us gentlemen of the court as well as others who approached their flames; while to many they have been gentle, amiable, favorable and courteous." Brantôme previously had had occasion to say what he meant by the courtesy of these fair ones: "Thus I believe that the best time they have ever had was when they were maidens, for it was in their free choice to be religious if they chose, to belong to Venus or Diana, but they had the wisdom and the cleverness to preserve the shape of their bellies."

This was what the Queen demanded of them, and undoubtedly she got what she wanted, this wise and clever Queen, well schooled in all the good devices (*bons engins*) for avoiding this mishap of

war. She was always pitiless when the mishap occurred. She drove from her court Mademoiselle de Limeuil, the most beautiful of her waiting women, who "had spared nothing to serve her mistress" as Mezeray says, but who, after having seduced and enchained the Prince of Conde, head of the Protestant party, had the awkwardness to find herself "inconvenienced for nine months," as the grave Mezeray also remarks, and she went one fine day to give birth in the wardrobe of the Queen mother. There was composed upon this subject a Latin *pasquil*, which begins thus:

*Puella ista nobilis,
Quae erat amabilis
Commisit adulterium
Et nuper fecit filium;
Sed dicunt matrem reginam
Illi fuisse Lucinam.
Et quod hoc patiebatur
Ut principem lucraretur:
At multi dicunt quod pater
Non est princeps, sed est alter. . . .*

The *Discours Merveilleux de la Vie de Catherine de Médici* relates that the Prince of Conde being prisoner at the court of France in 1561, the demoiselle of Limeuil was one of the maidens whom the Queen "had sent to him to debauch him, a very laudable ambition, providing that she attained her designs." When the Queen wished to reproach her with her accident, in 1564, "Limeuil had the boldness to tell her that she had in this merely followed the example of her mistress and accomplished the latter's command." Mademoiselle de Rouet, the companion and friend of Mademoiselle de Limeuil, played her *rolet* better when the Queen charged her with the duty of winning over the King of Navarre and of "amusing him thoughtfully with the pleasures of the court," according to the expression of Henri Estienne. This was, according to Aubigné, in the *Confession de Sancy*, a sort of angling with nets which Catherine de Medici

brought to bear upon the sea of politics: "When the waters were not too greatly troubled, they fished for the sleepy ones; and in this they did not spare the Indian berry (*coque de Levant*), which is furnished by the druggists of Italy. By this means, the weightiest were taken, like the Marshals of Montmorency and Cosée. After which, they lay in wait for the big fish: by this means, Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, was taken by Rouet and Louis de Bourbon by Limeuil, but the latter victim, being vigorous and feeling himself taken broke the meshes and escaped. Some fish were lost in the wake of the Dauphins, like the dog fish, the brill, the mackerels and all the small fry who follow the court."

It is to be divined that, among this *compagnie* of ladies and maids, to the number of two or three hundred, who lived together and who did not quit one another's company day or night, the prevalent depravation of manners soon led to the most scandalous disorders, which were not so secret but Brantôme dares to reveal and even to excuse them in his *Dames Galantes*. Sauval merely mentions, with as much decency as possible, those turpitudes which the historian of the *Dames Galantes* is pleased to describe in detail with his habitual cynicism: "Just as the men had found a way of doing without women," says Sauval, "the women had found a way of doing without men. A great Princess loved then one of her demoiselles because she was an hermaphrodite. Paris, as well as the court, was filled to overflowing with Lesbian women, whom their husbands held all the more dear for the reason that with them they might live without jealousy. Some, without hiding the matter, might have reared weasels, which the ancients employed as hieroglyphs to signify low women (*tribades*); others would warm themselves with their adorers, without, however, being willing to satisfy the latter, and then would return to refresh themselves, or rather debase themselves with their companions. This fine life, in short, was so pleasing to some that they desired neither to marry themselves, nor to suffer their associates to be married." (*Amours des Rois de France*, edition in 12mo of 1739, page 115). Brantôme, it is to be noticed, does not

say that the Lesbians of the court of France *did rear* weasels; we do not know for what purpose; he remarks merely that these little animals were with the ancients the symbol "of feminine loves," which, he adds, "were carried on in two fashions, some by means of *fricarelles*, others, as the poet says, "by *geminos committere cunnos*. This fashion brings with it no damage, some say, when one makes use of instruments fashioned in the form of . . . : which are commonly called *godemichys*," a word formed with two Latin words: *Gaude mihi*.

Brantôme, after having shown his classical erudition on a subject which was not less common then than in Greek and Roman antiquity, demands seriously whether two ladies, "amorous one of the other, as is frequently seen today, sleeping together and doing what is called *donna con donna*, in imitation of the learned Sappho of Lesbos; are able to commit adultery and between them to make their husbands cuckolds." He goes on to cite a number of examples in support of his opinion, which would not appear to be in accord with that of Martial: "A fine case we have," he says, "where, without a man, there is still adultery!" We unfortunately do not possess the resources of the Latin to reproduce the guilty orgies of the French Lesbians, whom Brantôme regards with an eye of indulgence, especially in certain cases: "One sometimes excuses," he says, "virgins and widowed women for loving these vain and frivolous pleasures, loving better to give themselves to each other and to exchange their mutual warmth, than to go with men and become pregnant and dishonored, or to lose their fruit, as many have done and do; and it is their opinion that they do not thereby so greatly offend God and are not so much whores as they would be with men." Brantôme, in this ticklish chapter, which he might have "prolonged a thousand times" more than he has done, does not name any of the ladies who indulged in these infamous *fricarelles*, but he gives to understand that the maids of honor of the Queen mother and the Princesses of the blood were in the habit of corrupting each other. He relates, after the confidences of M. de Clermont-Tallard, that this

lord "being a small lad" and sharing then the studies of the young Duke of Anjou, who was later to become Henri III, perceived one day, through the cracks in a partition, two "very great ladies" who "were passing thus the time." He adds to the licentious circumstances of his recital: "I have known many others who have indulged in the same amours, among whom, I have heard tell of one from the mouths of all, who was very superlative in this and who had a number of ladies, honoring them and serving them more than the men, and making love to them like a man to his mistress; and if she took to any of them, she would entertain them *à pot et à feu* and would give them whatever they wanted. Her husband was quite at ease, and very content, as well as other husbands whom I have seen, who were quite at ease at seeing their wives engaged in such amours rather than those with men, thinking their wives thereby not so light nor so whorish. But I believe they were deceived; for this little exercise, from what I have heard tell, is but an apprenticeship to the great trade with men."* One may be astonished that, in the midst of these hideous disorders, which knew no moral or religious barriers, the husbands were still occupied with their conjugal honor. It is, however, averred that these husbands, even those who in their youth had led the most dissolute life and brought the most grief to the virtue of women, were in general very unaccommodating on their own account and prided themselves on defending and keeping for themselves that which they so many times had taken from others. Hence the furious jealousies and the terrible reprisals, which only served to bring to light the audacity and the astuteness of the women. Brantôme, in the first discourse of his *Dames Galantes*, entitled *De l'Amour de Plusieurs Dames Mariées et qu'Elles n'en Sont si Blasmables, Comme on Diroit, Pour le Faire*, has endeavored to write the annals of the great "cuckolds" of the sixteenth century, and one is forced to recognize the fact that, despite the universal depravation, the point of honor in mar-

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf. the modern Sapphism or Lesbianism, particularly prevalent in America since the World War. Where is the Brantôme to do another *Dames Galantes*?

riage, appeared to be more sacred, if not better guarded, than in less dissolute epochs. The husbands were all the more jealous for the reason that they had more motives for being so, and since no one showed them any sympathy in their misadventures, they were all the more vindictive and cruel toward their unfaithful wives; we may explain thus why it was the introduction of chastity girdles in France took place publicly under the reign of Henri III, undoubtedly on the advice of certain Italians of the court, who were familiar with the means employed in their own country, for putting under lock and key, like a treasure, the virtue of women.

Nothing is better established than the fact that this Italian mode, which had existed especially at Venice for a number of centuries, and which had come there from the Orient, was actually introduced at this time. It is probable that the Crusades also had brought to France an odious custom which could not be reconciled with the respect which our ancestors bore to ladies. This custom dated back, nevertheless, to the highest antiquity, and was perpetuated among those peoples whose religion supported the slavery of women. But "a nation as spiritual as ours," as M. le Comte de Laborde remarks with spirit (*Notice des Emaux, Bijoux et Objets Divers du Musée du Louvre*, Volume II, page 197), undoubtedly was inclined to reject with contempt this shameful instrument of servitude. It would seem always that the chastity girdle had been preserved as an exception in the manners of the most refined Chivalry, and that, if a husband did not impose it on his wife, the mother on her daughter, a brother on his sister, the lover or the friend (*amie*) would adopt it herself, as a symbol of fidelity, presenting the key to her *ami* or to the lover. This was one of those *emprises* which the ladies and their servants set themselves reciprocally to prove the constancy and *sûreté* of their love. The *girdle de sûreté*, in place of being an outrage and a shame, became thus a delicate act of tender devotion. Such is, in our opinion, the most natural explanation which might be given for a number of passages in the poems and letters of Guillaume de Machaut, relative to the "treasure"

(*trésor*) to which his mistress, Agnes of Navarre, had given him the key.

M. le Comte de Laborde, who cites these curious passages, would not have it that this *trésor* designated a chastity girdle. Following, however, are the terms which the poet of the fifteenth century makes use of to inform us that he held the key to the "treasure" of Madame Agnes:

Adonc, la belle m'accola. . . .
Si attingny une clavette
D'or, et de main de maistre faite,
Et dist: "Ceste clef porterez,
Amys, et bien la garderez,
Car c'est la clef de mon tresor.
Je vous en fais seigneur des or;
Et, dessus tout, en serez mestre,
Et si l'aim' plus que mon ceil destre,
Car c'est mon heur, c'est ma richesse,
*C'est ce dont je puis faire largesse!"**

Agnes of Navarre, writing to Guillaume de Machaut, addressed to him certain suggestions which have no sense, if this *trésor* was not what we think it was: "Be careful, darling, not to lose the key of my box (*coffre*),† for if it were lost, I should not hope, darling, ever to have perfect joy; for, *par Dieu*; it shall never be opened by any other key than that which you hold, and that shall be when it pleases you, for in this world I have of nothing else so great desire." This quotation and others, equally explicit,

*And then, my lady gave to me
 A very cunning-fashioned key,
 A key of gold, of master-make,
 And said, "This key, my lover, take
 And guard it well for love's sweet sake,
 For it is the key to my treasury,
 And you are the lord of all currency;
 Yes, you are, indeed, the lord and master,
 And I would lose my right eye faster
 Than part with it, for it is my wealth,
 Given by largess, never won by stealth.

†Cf. our current vulgarism.

still do not prevent M. de Laborde from denying the authenticity of these chastity girdles, which are to be found in certain collectors' cabinets: "In singularities of this sort," he remarks, with a distraction which is too evident to permit us to think of reproaching him for a lack of erudition, "one is very brave when one has the pen of a Brantôme."

"In the time of King Henry," relates Brantôme in his *Dames Galantes*, "there was a certain sharper (*quinquailleux*) who brought a dozen of these devices to the fair of Saint-Germain, *pour brider le cas des femmes*, devices which were made of iron and in the form of a girdle, and which were closed below and locked with a key, so subtly made that it was not possible for a woman, being once bridled with them, being ever able to overcome them for a gentle pleasure, having as she did but a few small holes *pour servir à pisser*." The description of these girdles is too precise not to have been made *de visu* and Brantôme, in reporting the fact, does not appear to marvel at it, as though the thing were in any wise new to him: He adds that "many gallants, honest gentlemen of the court, threatened this cursed sharper with death, if he persisted in manufacturing and selling these *engins* which were so distasteful to them, and they obliged him to hurl into the latrines all that remained of his stock. As to the anecdote of the woman who prostituted herself to a lockmaker in order to obtain a duplicate key to the girdle which the husband believed he alone could open, it is probably one of those pleasant tales which the appearance of the girdles put into circulation at court. However this may be, if the *quinquailleux* of the fair of Saint-Germain was forced to sacrifice a few of these devices, the model was not lost, and they continued to be manufactured secretly for the use of certain jealous husbands, who did not blush to conduct themselves toward their wives like slave merchants in Turkey. Ridicule, for the rest, took revenge on this indecent invention, and there were but a small number of husbands or lovers who dared call to their aid these cinctures which the French law looked upon as a grave offense on the part of the husband

against the wife. And yet, examples of these strange shackles were to be found still down to the middle of the eighteenth century, since we find the advocate Freydier pleading in Parliament in behalf of a married woman who accuses her husband of having subjected her to such unworthy treatment. (See his *Playdoier Contre l'Introduction des Cadanas ou Ceintures de Chasteté*, Montpellier, 1750, in-8, with a figure representing the cadenas.)

Italian customs must certainly have become deeply rooted in France for such objects as these to be shown in public and especially for them to be purchased and made use of. We shall see, in another chapter, how the influence of Italy had perverted the manners of men at the court of the Valois, but we shall also make the point, for the honor of our own country, that these turpitudes rarely went beyond the confines of the court, but were generally repressed, condemned and cursed by French gallantry. The court alone at this period, was the scene and receptacle of all the most hideous vices; Catherine de Medici had looked upon this unbridled corruption as serving the interests of her political policy, by softening the strongest characters, and degrading the noblest hearts; but she thereby gave to the enemies of her government, *a ceux de la Religion*, as they were called, an immense force and a terrible weapon; for the Reformation, in rearing the standard of revolt against royalty and popery, might say to the people with reason that the object of this holy warfare was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The people learned in this manner to despise and to hate the great; they gave faith to all rumors, true or false, which spread like echoes from the court; they were no longer indifferent to the private lives of princes and courtiers; they believed they had the right to summon these mighty ones before their own tribunal, and they pronounced the downfall of Henri III when the League insisted upon his taking arms under pretext of his defending the manners and the religion of his ancestors. One might therefore say that, if Catherine de Medici had recourse to Prostitution for purposes of government,

it was Prostitution which, by dishonoring the King and the court of France, led to the great popular uprising of the League.

We would not, however, credit all the abominations which the writers among the reformers have imputed to their implacable enemy, Catherine de Medici. It appears to us impossible that this Queen should herself, with political intentions, have corrupted the manners of her own sons, and those of her three daughters. Catherine, however ambitious she may have been, was a tender and devoted mother. We see, from her correspondence, that she had nothing more at heart than the strengthening of the royal power through the house of Valois; if she herself always reigned under the name of her sons, it was that she felt herself more capable than they of directing affairs and of sustaining the throne upon which they sat, one after another. She was profoundly chagrined that none of her four sons seemed to promise her a numerous posterity nor gave evidence of a desire to found a royal house and continue the line of Henri II. One would not then admit as a likely fact, that she would have set herself, so to speak, to cast with her own hand a blemish on the sources of heredity in her own family. It has been asserted, in certain atrocious brochures, that she did not wait for the age of puberty in her children to give them over to the most disgusting form of Prostitution; according to these anonymous pamphleteers, she had, by such frightful and disorderly proceedings, profoundly affected the health of the unhappy Kings, Francis II, Charles IX, and Henri III, who as a result of a premature abuse of their physical forces, were no longer capable of having heirs. To Charles IX fell the task of giving the lie to this calumny, since he had a legitimate daughter who died at an early age, and two natural children. It is permissible to suppose, nevertheless, that these Kings would not have permitted the line of the Valois to be extinguished if debauchery had spared their youth. As to the report that Catherine had incestuous relations with her son Henri, whom she loved, as a matter of fact, more than the others, that is one of those infamies which history should be ashamed to pick up

from the mud of civil wars, in the course of which each party is forced to defile the other in the persons of its leaders. Catherine was, undoubtedly, too indulgent so far as the morality of her children is concerned, and that is all there was to it.

Francis II, who died so young, and who was of so frail a constitution, "was not subject to love like his predecessors," reports Brantôme, "and in this, he suffered great wrong, for he had for wife the most beautiful woman in the world and the most amiable (Mary Stuart). . . . I have seen him," adds Brantôme, "fail a number of times." Charles IX, who succeeded him, did not care greatly for ladies in his early youth; he preferred to them the chase and gymnastic exercises; he replied, however, to a great lady, who reproached him with his coldness: "And so you have this opinion of me because I love the exercise of the chase more than that sport of yours? *Hé! par Dieu!* If I cared to give myself to it just once, I would so close upon you, all you others of my court, that I should bring you to earth one after another." Brantôme who cites this response of the King, adds to it merely: "Which however, he did by no means do, but undertook it a few times, more for the sake of his reputation than out of lasciviousness, and very soberly the while, setting himself to choose a maiden of good house, whom I shall not name, for his mistress, who was a very beautiful, wise and respectable *demoyselle*, to whom he showed all the honor and respect that was possible." This mistress was Marie Touchée, daughter of a perfumer or a notary of Orleans, and he loved her as long as he lived, but always secretly, for the Queen mother, very complacent toward passing amours, looked with much displeasure upon the prospect of the King becoming seriously enamoured of a girl who would give him bastards. Catherine de Medici had declared herself so opposed to this concubinage, that Charles IX, on his death bed, did not have the courage to commend Marie Touchée. It was, however, love which caused the death of Charles IX, if we are to believe the

scandalous chronicle of the court, which was popularized by means of this epitaph to the King:

*Pour aimer trop Diane et Cythérée aussy,
L'une et l'autre m'ont mis en ce tombeau icy.**

Brantôme expresses doubts as to the truth of the rumors which were then current: "Some have desired to make it out that during his malady he escaped to the side of *the Queen, his wife*, and there warmed himself so that he shortened his days; which has given rise to the saying that Venus along with Diana caused his death." We have printed in italics the words which the first editor of Brantôme permitted to creep into the original text to replace three initial letters which were found there. "Brantôme," says Sauval, who had under his eyes a good manuscript of this gossipy historian, "tells us some had said that, during his malady, he had eloped with Queen Marguerite, although he avows that at the court nothing was ever said of their amours; but according to the rumor finally prevalent, it was with L. R. M., in which there would be much appearance of truth, and it is undoubtedly in this manner that the passage of Brantôme must be restored, for in short, from the fashion in which their amour was talked of, they loved more than fraternally, and they even did not endeavor to conceal it any too much." The incest of Marguerite of Valois with her brother, Charles IX, is but too well established, although Brantôme does not make allusion to it, except in this single passage, in which the name of Marguerite is hidden under initials which might be interpreted in various fashions. But it must not be forgotten that Brantôme was the favorite and also the secretary of Queen Marguerite; it is easy to understand the discretion he would have to observe toward this Princess. The author of the *Divorce Satyrique*, written under the inspiration of a husband and a wrathful King who wanted a divorce, did not have to pre-

*For loving Diane and Cythérée, too,
One and the other lass have been miscue.
(Literally, have put him in this tomb.)

serve the same discretion; nevertheless, he avoids reflecting upon the mother of kings of France the shame which he pitilessly brings to bear upon their sister; he envelops in obscurity those incests which he avows with regret: "She afterwards added," he says, "to her filthy conquests her young brothers, of whom one, namely François (Duke of Alençon) continued this incest all his life; and Henri (Henri III) disesteemed this so greatly that afterward he was not able to esteem her, having for a long time noticed that the years, in place of arresting her desires, had merely augmented their fury." The amours of Charles IX and his sister, whom he named *Margot*, would have caused more scandal in a court that was less demoralized; but as it was, almost no attention was taken of it, and this shameful topic merely provided a theme for a few *pasquils* and a few *chansons*. It is to be presumed, moreover, that this incest was, for both the brother and the sister, but a passing distraction, and that they both returned to their favorite occupations, Charles to the chase and Marguerite to gallantry. Charles IX knew Margot entirely too well not to have judged her as she is judged in the *Divorce Satyrique*: "Everything is indifferent to her pleasures, and she thinks neither of age, grandeur nor of extraction, providing she may intoxicate and satisfy her appetites." The writer thus explains what he would have liked to say in those words which were repeated apropos the marriage of the King of Navarre to Marguerite of Valois: "I do not merely give my sister Margot to my cousin of Navarre, I give her equally to all the Huguenots of France." This marriage hid a detestable ambushcade and treason: the Protestant chiefs who had come to Paris to assist the nuptials and to sign the peace, were involved, most of them, in the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. The day after that bloody night, Charles IX remarked with a smile to his gentlemen: "Teh! but my big Margot has a gentle c. . . .! By the blood of God! I do not think there is another like it in the world; it has taken all my Huguenot rebels like a bird call (*a la pippée*)!" (*Journal de Henri III* by Pierre de l'Estoile, edited and published after the original manuscripts by A. Champillion.)

It is a singular fact that the Queen mother, who had encouraged this frightful license for political reasons rather than from love of debauchery, did not herself mingle in the bacchanalia of the court. Agrippa d'Aubigné, and other reformed writers tell us, and Savual repeats their words, that, "this Princess loved the greatest prelate of her times and many other seigneurs." But we are forced to regard these vague allegations as false, when we do not find in Brantôme a single word which makes allusion to such a gallantry on the part of the Queen mother. Henri Estienne says merely, in *le Discours Merveilleux*, that Catherine, from her earliest youth, had shown "evident signs of an ambitious spirit and one subject entirely to her own pleasures." We are disposed to believe that one should read here *volontes* (will) in place of *voluptes* (pleasures). As to the Cardinal of Lorraine, who, on the sayso of l'Estoile, always had in his mouth "*ce vilain mot de f. . .*," and who, on the sayso of Brantôme was "the greatest filler of wood (braggart: *abatteur de bois*) in the realm," he was the accomplice in the political acts of the Queen mother; but if he had the good fortune to render her faithless to the memory of her husmand, he guarded well this state secret. Brantôme relates that this superb Cardinal, passing to the court of Piedmont, forcibly embraced two or three times the Duchess of Savoy (Beatrice of Portugal), who had refused to accord him the honor of the kiss of etiquette. "What!" he said to her, "am I a person to be treated in this manner and fashion? I kiss the Queen my mistress, who is the greatest Queen in the world; and you, I should not kiss you, who are but a dirty little Duchess? And what would you say if you knew that I have slept with ladies as beautiful and of as great or greater house than you?" Brantôme discreetly adds: "It is possible that he spoke the truth;" and it is permissible to suppose that the Cardinal, who had come near betraying his secret, was boasting of the kindness which the Queen mother had shown him to the exclusion of all others.

However this may be, Catherine de Medici, despite her example or lack of example, was not any too severe in the matter of

manners, nor even of modesty; as we may judge from the banquet which she gave to the King in 1577, in the garden of the château de Chanconeaux: "The most beautiful ladies and the most honest of the court," says the *Journal* of l'Estoile, "being half nude and having their hair scattered like brides, were employed for the table service." The chronicler was not there, unfortunately, and he is unable to inform us as to what followed the banquet. Fetes of this sort ended ordinarily in excesses which were but too favored by those committed at table. At the marriage of the goldsmith, Claude Marcel, with the daughter of the Seigneur de Vicourt, the ceremony took place at the hôtel de Guise, and all the court was invited to it. After the supper, King Henri III and his mignons, the Princesses and the ladies of the court put on masks to *porter le momon* to the newlyweds, an indecent ceremony which was a survival of the cult of Priapus and Venus. "The wisest ladies and damoiselles retired, and were wise in doing so," says l'Estoile, "for the confusion brought with it such disorder and infamy that, if the tapestries had been able to speak, they would have said many fine things." (See the *Journal de Henri III*, under date of December 10, 1578.)

The mask, under the reign of the Valois, was not less propitious to amours than in the time of Charles VI; for, according to the expression of Brantôme, "the mask hides everything."* But the ladies of the court of Charles IX and Henri III ordinarily disdained these precautions and mysteries: "Wishing to communicate with their servants," says Brantôme, "and not as with rocks and marbles; but, after having chosen well, they know how to make themselves gravely and gently served and loved by them. And afterwards, having known their fidelity and loyal perseverance, they prostitute themselves to them in a fervent amour and take their pleasure with them, not in masks, nor in silence nor mute, nor amid the shadows of night, but in open day they let themselves be seen, tasted, touched and embraced; enjoying the

*The masque, in painting, has become a sentimental type, of which Etchevery's "*Sous la Masque*" is as representative as any.

entertainment of fine and lascivious discourse, of foolish sayings and lubricious words."

This license of language was looked upon at that time as an indispensable ragoût to the sensual pleasures: "Words have a great deal to do with love," says Brantôme, who devotes to this subject a chapter of his *Dames Galantes*, "they have a very great efficacy, and where they are lacking, the pleasure is imperfect." The smutty poems which were read at court and which scandalized no one give us an idea of what must have been the indecency and brazenness of the ordinary tête-à-tête; thus Brantôme poses for us the principle that "when one is apart with his friend, every gallant lady desires to be free in her words and to say that which is pleasing to her, in order all the more to move Venus." We should not be astonished to know that the greatest ladies were in this particular, a "hundred times more lascivious and disorderly in their words than the common women and others." The proverb which found currency at this period, "whorish as a princess" (*putain comme une princesse*) was undoubtedly motivated by this monstrous debauchery of words which drew so much admiration from Brantôme, and which added every day so many words, so many images, so many ready-made phrases to the erotic tongue: "In other times," he remarks, with a bizarre philological naïveté, "our French language has not been so beautiful nor so enriched as it is today; for it has been a long time since the Italian, the Spanish and the Greek were so, and never have I met a lady who spoke this language, however little she was practised in the trade of love, but she spoke it very well." Thus, we see that no sort of Prostitution, including that of the good French language, was lacking at this depraved court, which rivalled the bad houses in both manners and language. (See especially the *Premières Œuvres Poétiques du Capitaine Lasphrise*, Paris, J. Gesselin, 1599, 12 mo.)

CHAPTER XXXIV

IT IS a fact remarkable enough that the ordinance of Louis IX, which abolished legal Prostitution, but which could not be put into execution during the reign of that holy King, was promulgated anew and put in force again in the reign of Charles IX. The philosophers and magistrates had thought up to then that there was a real danger in any attempt to suppress absolutely, in principle as in fact, public debauchery, that inevitable leprosy of the body social; but the civil authorities were in agreement with the ecclesiastical authorities in the attempt to prevent the evil from spreading beyond those limits which legislation had marked out for it. Suddenly, in the middle of the sixteenth century, amidst all the depravation and all the excesses of manners, in view of the most brazenly corrupt court, legal Prostitution was prohibited and abolished by an edict of the King, which the successors of Charles IX did not dare to repeal nor even modify by giving it a less rigorous interpretation. This edict, it is true, had been issued in the name of the young King who was then a ward by the States of Orleans, which concerned themselves with the reformation of manners with a zeal worthy of a more virtuous epoch. Article 101 of the great ordinance of 1560, which was not read and registered in Parliament until the 13th of September, 1561, was couched thus: "It is forbidden to all persons to lodge and receive in their houses for more than one night persons unknown and without employment. They are enjoined to denounce these to justice, under pain of prison and an arbitrary fine. All *bordeaux*, *berlans*, games of nine-pins and of dice are also to be punished extraordinarily, without dissimulation or connivance on the part of the judges, under pain of being deprived of their offices."

It may be supposed, with much likelihood, that this article passed unperceived among the 148 articles which composed the

ordinance; for the word *bordeaux* had not found a place, without good intention, beside the word *berlans*, as though to confuse and assimilate the two. This word alone did not, perhaps, in the thought of the legislator, imply the absolute suppression of the bad houses and the complete abolition of Prostitution. Charles IX was but ten years old at the time he signed the edict, which he was not capable of understanding, and which he probably would not have approved later. "Never," says Étienne Pasquier, in one of his letters (Volume II, page 520), "never had a King who preceded him made such fine edicts as he: witness that of the year 1560 of the States then held in the city of Orleans, another which he issued at Roussillon in the year 1563, and the last at Moulins in the year 1566, containing these three edicts, an infinitude of articles on police matters and fine regulations which for a long time were looked upon as among our first ordinances. To whom are we indebted for this good? To none other than Messire Michel de l'Hospital, his great and wise chancellor, who, under the authority of the young King, his master, was the principal agent of the first and the instigator, promoter and author of the other two. "And if only," adds the sage and learned Pasquier, "they had been in all points observed with the same devotion as that with which they were framed!" We must then attribute to the great chancellor, Michel de l'Hospital all the honor of these decrees, which, as Pasquier says, soon fell into desuetude, but which left behind them in our codes the imperishable evidence of a high morality.

The ordinance prohibiting Prostitution, we may be assured, created general surprise, and was looked upon at first as incapable of being enforced, at least in Paris. It had been preceded, however, by various royal ordinances which appeared to have prepared the path for it, and which, despite obstacles and resistance, were executed faithfully enough. Thus, clandestine Prostitution found itself hunted down and prosecuted in such a manner that a dissolute woman might at any moment be expelled from the house in which she lodged, while the neighbors had a right to

force the proprietor to break her lease. What is more, the tenant of good life and manners, who dwelt in a house of a woman of evil life, had but to denounce the latter as such in order to oblige her to dislodge herself after a simple judiciary complaint. The Parliament of Paris had confirmed a sentence of this sort by a decree of the 11th of September, 1542. A decree of the 10th of February, 1544, was still more explicit. "It was decided," says Capon, in his *Recueil d'Arrêts Notables des Cours Souveraines de France*, "that a woman of evil life should not be permitted to take a lease on a house which had been judicially seized, even though she offered more than another, and that, when she should have obtained such a house and established herself there, her evil life should be sufficient to cause her to be dislodged and to force her to break the lease." This was not all; Henri II had endeavored on a number of occasions to expel from the court and the army a multitude of lost women who lived on the fruit of their immodesty, following (*en suivant*) the army and the court; but Henri II did not include in this partial expulsion, those privileged daughters of joy who fulfilled their functions under the guidance of a *dame gouvernante*. As to the ribaudes of the army, no king, no general would have permitted himself to expel them all; but the military police did its best to diminish their number, which was always on the increase and which greatly interfered with discipline. We do not know as to the daughters of joy regularly attached to each body of troops; we only know that the marshals authorized the presence of one *goujat* for three soldiers: now in the armies goujats and ribaudes were on the same footing and shared the same fate.

The provost of Paris availed himself of the article relating to Prostitution, as soon as the edict of the year 1560 came to have the force of law, and he set about executing this law in the City. There was at this period, in the bourgeois classes, a sort of ostentation of moral austerity, as a protest against the disorders of the court, and at the same, as an attempt to rival the severe manners of the reformers. Protestantism had, so to speak, hurled a chal-

lenge to the Catholics by setting up as a model of continence and virtue those heretics who were hanged and burned as criminals.* There was at that time in Paris, as in all the principal cities, an open warfare on Prostitution, a crusade undertaken by the municipal power in order to do away with the dens of debauchery and their shameful inhabitants. The women of evil life, who up to then had peaceably carried on their scandalous industry under the protection of the laws and the magistrates, were driven beyond the walls of cities, arrested and imprisoned, condemned in case of a second offense to the lash, to prison, and to the brand, exposed to the pillory, hunted down in the fields like wild beasts and forced to go into hiding in order to escape this general persecution. It would appear, nevertheless, that the "bad places" of Paris, which had been devoted to legal Prostitution since the reign of Saint Louis, and which were, according to the terms of the ancient ordinances, "to this ordained and accustomed," it would appear that these places were not at first affected by the edict of 1560, for this edict did not appear to have the effect of weakening the old legislation, which for more than three centuries had regulated the condition of prostitutes. These latter, moreover, those at least whom the expense and dangers of a legal proceeding did not frighten, made a show of opposition before the provost and maintained that the new edict did not have the power to drive them from the "*places et lieux publics*" assigned to their trade: "That is to say," says the last ordinance of the provost, which had renewed that of Louis IX, in 1367, "at the Abreuvoir de Mascon in la Boucherie, rue Froidmantel, near the clos Brunelin Glatigny, in the Cour Robert de Paris, in Baillehöe, in Tyron, in the rue Chapon and in Champ-Flory." We do not know the circumstances surrounding this proceedings, which lasted for a number of years. But we are inclined to believe that Prostitution continued to remain mistress of some of these more ancient asylums. "The streets of Glatigny, or the Val d'Amour, of Arras or

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf. in this respect, the moral excesses of Protestants over all Europe at that time, a species of lechery, *laudum immensa cupido*, which has resulted in the modern Puritanism.

Champ-Gaillard, of Fromentel or Fromenteau, etc., continued to offer retreats for debauchery." (*Hist. de Paris*, by Dulaure, edition of 1825, Volume IV, page 561. We have not discovered the decrees rendered on this point; but we may almost affirm that, if the number of public places named in the ordinance of 1367 was reduced by decision of Parliament, a number of others remained in possession of their obscene privilege, when it was proved by authentic documents, that they had been, in a manner, set up by Saint Louis. Thus, the lupanar of the rue Chapon, which had for so long braved the bishops of Châlons by remaining open in the very shadow of the doorway of their hôtel, was only then closed, under failure to justify its "*ancienneté*." (*Antiquit. de Paris* by Sauval, Volume II, page 78.)

Another bad house, more celebrated on account of its governess who was called "Mother* Cardine," held out longer than all the other bordaux of Paris against the royal ordinance which suppressed these places. La mère Cardine, whom we know from a number of satiric pieces published about this time, must have been the "queen of the procuresses" (*reine des maquereilles*) of Paris; she was, one can be certain, very rich, since she was able to defray the expense of a long litigation, and, when judgment was rendered against her by the tribunal of the Châtelet, she still possessed sufficient influence to prevent execution of judgment. The establishment of La mère Cardine was considerable; it occupied a number of large houses in the rues du Grand and du Petit Heuleu in the center of the quartier Dourg-l'Abbé. These infamous streets, the names of which, *Heuleu* or *Hue-leu*, indicate perhaps that it was the custom to "hoot" the debauchees who were seen entering there, had no other inhabitants than the girls and their vile lovers; all these houses, which had a "gable on the street" did their best to preserve their leases, and their owners, with this end in view, addressed supplications to the civil lieutenant of the Châtelet, to the provost of Paris, and finally to the King. But all was futile; after a long legal process, the King, by

*A common title even today for the governess of a *mauvais lieu*.

his letters patent of the 12th of February, 1565 (1566, according to the new style) commanded the civil lieutenants to expedite judgment and put the ordinance into execution without any more delay. As a consequence, judgment was cried to the sound of the trumpet by sworn criers at the entrance of the streets known as Hueleu. The women who were inhabitants of these streets left them within twenty-four hours, and all those bordeaux which had entered into a contest with the Châtelet and with Parliament were irrevocably closed. Sauval says, in speaking of this result, that in that year, "the asylums of public women were ruined from top to bottom." The letters patent of the King, registered at the Châtelet under date of the 24th of March, 1565 (or rather 1566), provoked a new ordinance on the part of the provost of Paris, who definitely suppressed legal Prostitution under terms of the edict of 1560. (See the *Edicts et Ordonnances des Roys de France*, collected by Fontanon, Volume I, page 574.) It was always the Chancellor Michel de l'Hospital who labored thus to purify manners: It was he who refused to permit the dissolute women to oppose the King and the magistrates. To the letters patent of the 12th of February, which concerned only the bordeaux de Heuleu, the provost of Paris had added this paraphrase, conforming the prohibitive article of the edict: "In addition, in accordance with law, upon the verbal request of the said persons of the King, all inhabitants of this city and suburbs of Paris and others are hereby forbidden to suffer in the houses a secret or public bordeau under pain of a fine of 60 Parisian pounds for the first time and a fine of 120 Parisian pounds for the second, and for the third time, confiscation of the property of the houses. And the said letters, together with the ordinances, shall be read to the sound of the trumpet and by public cry in the streets of this city as well as the suburbs of Paris, as well as other places where the said bordeaux are in order that no one may pretend cause of ignorance." Thus, the closing of the houses of debauchery in the rues du Grand and du Petit Hueleu occasioned also the closing of most of the bad houses which previously had existed at Paris; those which

were not affected by the general proscription, and which the provost of Paris permitted to go on existing behind closed doors, safeguarded by his tacit permission—these latter lost all the rights which they had held under the ordinance of Saint Louis, and since they no longer had any more than a mere provisory existence, we may believe that it was from this time on they were characterized by a nickname which has remained in use and which served to define the nature of their privilege: "*Houses of tolerance.*" Moreover, from this epoch on, as Sauval expressly says (Volume II, page 650) the public women "ceased to have statutes, judges, particular habits and special streets reserved for their dissoluteness." One might, then, say that legal Prostitution was legally abolished in France.

We have indicated the causes which impress us as having provoked this great police measure; we have said that Protestantism had forced the government thus to head a reform of manners; we have made it clear how the virtuous Chancellor de l'Hospital was especially interested in this reform, which satisfied the desires of honest folk, without distinction of religion or of politics. The various historians have assumed that the suppression of the bad houses had been occasioned by the imperious necessity of public health, for the venereal malady, which had spread in a frightful manner as a result of public debauchery, had made of each lupanar a redoubtable center of infection. We know that this horrible malady, the symptoms of which were not always so frightful as formerly, had multiplied its ravages until Prostitution had become a permanent enemy of public health. On the fourth of December, 1555, the King's advocate, M. Denis Riant, having made a complaint to the court of the Parliament of Paris against the bad houses of the Champ Gaillard and the Champ d'Albiac, where were daily committed "infinite thefts, many violences, larcenies and other misdemeanors by the tenants of the houses, who keep, at least the greater part of them, bordaux in their chambers, there receiving unknown folk, without employment, ruffians, vagabonds, poor girls and women," the King's

advocate stated in an addendum to his complaint, that "in the first year alone there have been found eighteen or twenty young men, scholars of honest families, suffering from the vérole, from haunting these places, a thing which is very pitiable, and requires that it be looked to." The Court had already issued two decrees, enjoining the proprietors in the Champ Gaillard and the Champ d'Albiac from renting their houses "except to known folk and reputed to be of good life and manners." It directed the criminal lieutenants to execute the preceding decrees and to put an end to the disorder. (See the *Hist. de Paris*, by Lobineau and Falibien, Volume II, page 767.)

It is practically established that the plague of Naples had invaded all the dens of debauchery at the moment when the edict of Charles IX totally suppressed Prostitution. The poet, Baïf, in his *Passetemps*, draws the picture of "Missir Macé," who had had "great misfortunes."

A suyvre les amours communes.

Following is the allocution which a friend addresses to this incorrigible, who was unable to refrain from "showing the girls a good time" (*désister de faire feste aux filles*):

*Comment n'êtes-vous pas content,
Missir Macé, d'avoir eu tant
Et tant de mauvaises fortunes
A suyvre les amours communes?
D'avoir si roide la vérole,
Que vous n'avez dent qui n'en grole?
D'avoir la vérole si bien,**

*Why are you so satisfied,
Missir Macé, to have tried
Your luck so many hapless times
In your common amorous crimes?
To have had the syphilis so stout,
You've not a tooth's not falling out.
To have had the syphilis so well,

*Que du nez ne vous rests rien?
D'avoir tout le palais mangé
Et d'avoir de chancres rongé
Votre membre plus qu'à demy?**

Another epigram of Baïf, in which one Galin is the hero of an equally sorry adventure, depicts the latter under colors not less hideous:

*Pour hanter souvent les bourdeaux
Le chancre t'accueillit si bien,
Que du nez en ta face rien
Ne t'est resté, que les naseaux!†*

A writer of the same time, Antoine Duverdier, who thinks that: "God has sent this plague upon earth as a scourge to revenge the filthy, illicit and common lecheresses of the bad houses," recognizes in his *Diverses Leçons*, that "this malady was a good deal more contagious formerly than it is now, on account of certain sovereign remedies which have been found but still he is astonished that the debauchees dared to risk contracting for the second time, a malady which, while not ordinarily fatal, ordinarily leaves sorry souvenirs with its victims: 'There are a number,' he exclaims with surprise, 'who have had the vérole six or seven times!'" Louis Guyon, who wrote his *Diverses Leçons* to follow those of Duverdier; points out, as a physician, that the venereal malady still baffled all the efforts of science. "This venereal contagion," he says (Volume I, page 612), "for the reason that it is generally communicated through lechery and an indecent act, is, as a consequence, shameful." Louis Guyon, who means to say by

*You've not a nose that I can tell.
To have had your palate eaten away,
While gnawing chancres devour, they say,
Your member half in two.

†For having haunted the bourdeaux,
Your features with the chancres go,
And nothing's left of nose or face
But two small nostrils in their place.

that that the virus of the *femme paillard*e is more dangerous in the bordeaux than anywhere else, cites the case of two young adolescents of high family, whom he had treated at Paris in 1563, and whom he had not succeeded in curing. These two imprudent youths, it is true, had endeavored to hide their condition until it became known "by the scurf, by red pustules which appeared on their foreheads, by the pains in the middle of their backs, as well as in their arms, legs, buttocks, shoulders, and in the front of the head, every night until the dawn of day, and by other signs, like pain in the gullet, and not being able to swallow their food." All the physicians and surgeons, into whose hands the poor patients fell, so failed in their cures that an ambassador of the King of Spain, hearing the poor victims groan all night long, counselled the latter to sail for America and there seek a cure in accordance with a custom practiced by the natives of the country. This treatment met with great success, and the unfortunate ones who had departed in a hectic condition, and looking like corpses, came back to France in a flourishing state of health. Such a result undoubtedly served to confirm the opinion of certain savants, who would have it that the plague of Naples had been discovered at the same time as America by Christopher Columbus; on the other hand, this opinion was not yet so well established but that certain doctors of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris sustained with tenacity the thesis that this malady was not new, having, they insisted, merely changed character. "They are greatly in the wrong," said Antoine Duverdier, "who hold that this malady which the Greeks called *leichen*, Pliny *mentagra* and we *feu volage* or *male dartre* is the same malady as that vulgarly called the *vérole*."

It is possible, then, that the men of State, who were endeavoring to abolish Prostitution by an edict of the King, were merely endeavoring to apply an heroic remedy to that shameful malady which they hoped to drive out of France, along with the miserable women, almost all of whom were infected with it. But it might easily be foreseen that in thus forcing the population of the bad houses to reenter the bosom of society and there to dis-

guise themselves under decent exteriors, one was merely causing the venereal contagion to flow into the current of domestic life. Documents are absolutely lacking to enable us to appreciate the physiological and hygienic effects of the closing of the houses of debauchery. This effect was not, as might be supposed, a cessation of public disorder which no longer, it is true, possessed privileged and authorized asylums, but which became all the bolder in exposing itself to the light of day. Thus, clandestine Prostitution had public market in all the streets and all the public places; the "common" woman, in losing the right legally to practice her trade under certain fixed conditions, acquired the right to show herself everywhere, and to regulate herself the conditions of the criminal industry which she carried on in secret. There were soon, undoubtedly, as many secret lupanars at Paris as there had been public ones before; the number of agents of Prostitution did not diminish; quite on the contrary, the procurers of both sexes had become more necessary as well as more numerous; custom had soon adopted, in the city and in the suburbs, certain spots as meeting places, where debauchery went to recruit its militias and to set up its batteries. As to the bordeaux, which were no longer under the surveillance of the municipal power, they fell into the hands of those degraded beings, who had no fear of exposing themselves to the chastisements of the law, and who made these immodest taverns the dens of all crime.

We cannot doubt that the edict of 1560 against the bordeaux had scandalous consequences, when we behold vagabond Prostitution grouping itself by night about the stone crosses which were reared in almost all the public places of Paris. In 1572, the Bishop of Paris reared the Croix de Gastine, erected upon a small square in the rue de Saint-Denis; and this cross, according to the expression of one chronicler, "served as a sign to debauchees," who assembled there every evening and who there committed a thousand profanations." The *Journal de Henri III* relates in these terms, the removal of another cross, which libertinism had no less profaned: "On the night of Thursday, the

10th of March, 1580, by ordinance of the Bishop of Paris, and with the secret consent of the court, was removed from the place where it had stood the crucifix nicknamed *maquereau*, and by the police borne to the Bishop, and this on account of the scandalous nickname which the people had given it, by reason of the fact that this crucifix of painted and gilded wood, of the size which are ordinarily to be seen in parishes, was placed against the wall of a house, situated at the bottom of the old rue du Temple, near the sewers, in which house and its environs was kept a *bordeau*; in such manner that this venerable instrument of our redemption served as a sign to the whorish retreats." Pierre de l'Estoile does not inform us whether this *bordeau* was closed by order of the provost after the Bishop, Pierre de Gondi, had put an end to a scandal which was more deplorable than one arising from the immunity of a "shop" (*doutique*) of debauchery.

The majority of houses at that time had signs which made them easily recognizable in the absence of numbers and other indications. The houses of Prostitution had also to have their *marque* or *enseigne*, which was not always suggestive of the destination of the place, for the sign might be more ancient; but frequently the sign would proclaim, by means of an indecent emblem or equivocal device, the sort of commerce to which the place was devoted. Thus, Paganioi de la Force affirms that the quartier Gros-Gaillou owed its name to a "great flint" (*gros-caillou*) which served as a sign to the lupanar. In any case, this name had not been in use before the end of the sixteenth century, and it may be ascribed to the installation of this house of debauchery and its metaphorically obscene sign. We shall not undertake an etymological digression with the object of explaining what this "caillou" could have been; we may divine its nature without effort in seeking its origin in these verses of an old poet:

*Jouer au jeu qu'aux cailles on appelle,
Aux filles est chose plaisante et belle.**

*To play at skittles, as the game they call,
Is a fine and pleasant thing to maidens all.

The historians of Paris mention a number of signs of the same sort, which had given the name of rue de la Corne to two streets of the suburb Saint-Germain-des-Pres, now called the rue Beurrière and the rue Neuve-Guillemin, as well as to a street of the suburb Saint-Marceau, which had been closed in the seventeenth century, and which has since become the Cul-de-sac des Corderies. Sauval reports that there was a deer's head "which the people call *corne*," fastened up on the wall at the corner of the rue de la Corne, and that this deer's head had also given its name of rue de la Petite-Corne to the adjacent street; but he adds that this name had come from the fact that a "troop of prostitutes came there first to establish themselves." It was at the end of the sixteenth century that those prostitutes who were no longer permitted to reside within the walls of the city took refuge in the suburb, where the Abbot of Saint-Germain permitted them to set up their abodes in return for a fixed revenue. But later, this place of debauchery led to such disorders and so scandalized the good parishioners of Saint-Sulpice that the curé of this latter parish obtained from the Abbot of Saint-Germain the expulsion of these turbulent neighbors. With the sign which hung in front of their retreat, the two streets which this sign had christened, disappeared; one received the name of the rue de Guillemain, on account of a fief belonging to a family of that name, while the other took the name of rue Beurrière or des Beurriers; but the people, who remembered having seen the *corne* and the bad house which it advertised to the passer-by persisted for long in designating the two streets by their ancient names, although the new names had been engraved in letters of gold on the marble plaques at the corner of the two streets by order of the bailiff of Saint-Germain. It required a good deal of practice to become accustomed to these new names in place of the ancient ones, but the idea of the house of debauchery remained always attached to the place, "and," remarks Sauval, "since the name of *Guillemin* is somewhat proverbial, the people who are pleased to turn everything into raillery, not content with having added to the name of *Guillemin*, proprie-

tor of the garden, that of *Crocquesolle*, have also given the latter name to the street, so that the street is more often known as the rue *Guillemin-Crocquesolle* than it is as the rue *Guillemin*." Without entering into a long archaeological dissertation, we shall remark that *Guillemin*, in the language of the lower classes, signified sometimes a hypocrite, sometimes the characteristics of the man, the same as *guillery*; and the people then sung in the streets a famous refrain which was still in vogue under the regency, when it was always to be heard in the mouth of the Duke of Orleans (see the *Mém. du Cardinal Dubois*):*

*Du temps du roi Guillemot,
De la reine Guillemote,
On prenoit les hommes au mot
Et les femmes à la m. . . .†*

Let us leave it to the etymologists to seek and discover the origin of *guillemin* and *guillemot*!‡ As to *crocquesolle*, it is evidently a descriptive epithet, and it is our opinion that, *la solle* or *soulle* being a sport with a balloon which was greatly in use formerly a quite natural comparison had been brought into play between this sport and the game which is played in houses of prostitution, where the "common woman" passes from hand to hand, in the manner of a *solle* or balloon which the players toss from one to another; hence, the word *solle* as a synonym for prostitute and, by extension, for the natural characteristics of a debauched woman.

It is evident that the people had at that time very little sympathy or even pity for the women of evil life, since they pursued

*In this work will be found references to our author. See Ernest Dawson's translation, referred to in my Foreword.

†In the days of King Guillemot, I've heard,
And Queen Guillemote,
Men were taken at their word,
And women at their ———.

‡(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf. Fr. Guillemot (from Welsh Chwilawg), a marine diving bird of the genus *Uria*. The genesis of our current vulgarism becomes thus sufficiently plain.

them with hoots and frequently chased them with stones, when the women were recognized in decent streets. We have seen also that depraved men, who dared to enter in the light of open day those infamous streets, were not any better treated by the populace. We may be assured, then, that the edict of 1560, which suppressed legal Prostitution, met with a favorable reception at the hands of public opinion; and the inhabitants of Paris, with the exception of those who thrived on this species of Prostitution through the rent which they got for their houses, all applauded those police measures which led to the closing of the bad houses. The ruin and embarrassment of the courtiers of debauchery, the disarray and dispersion of the women, the wrath and confusion of the libertines, concerned no one, but amused all the world. There was an outburst of pleasantries and epigrams against these exiles and victims of Prostitution. It was, especially the lupanar of the Hueleu and its celebrated directrix, La Mère Cardine, who served as a subject of these facetious pieces in prose and verse, which the popular gaiety inspired with verve and in abundance. The best known of these facetious pieces was the *Enfer de la Mère Cardine*, the first edition of which we no longer possess, and which was certainly contemporary with all those poetical *canards* produced as a result of the destruction of the Hueleu. Following is the title of this rare and curious satire, directed against the most famous courtizan of that epoch: *l'Enfer de la Mère Cardine, traitant de la cruelle et terrible bataille qui fut aux enfers entre les diables et les maquerelles de Paris, aux nopces du portier Cerberus et de Cardine, qu'elles vouloient faire royne d'enfer, et qui fut celle d'entre elles, qui donna le conseil de la trahison. . .* (Without date and without indication of place, but undoubtedly printed at Paris about 1570, in-8.) This piece in verse, which was attributed to Flaminio de Birague, nephew of the Chancellor of France, was reprinted in 1583 and in 1597. In the new impressions, there was added a *chanson de certaines bourgeoises de Paris qui, feignant d'aller en voyage, furent surprises au logis d'une maquerelle a Saint-Germain-des-Prez*. There only

exist two or three samples of the reprints of the sixteenth century; but in 1793, a beneficent bibliophile, who did not care to see the *Enfer de la Mère Cardine* disappear entirely, prepared a new edition of it, 108 copies being struck off, which are now almost as rare as the ancient editions.

Following is the beginning of this allegoric poem, which is not, as M. le Marquis du Roure in his *Analectabiblion* supposes, an act of personal vengeance of the poet against Mother Cardine, but a collective satire, addressed to all the queens of Prostitution:

*Puisque l'oysiveté est mère de tout vice,
Je veux, en m'esbattant, chanter cy la malice,
La faulse trahyson et les cruels efforts,
Que fit Cardine un jour en la salle des morts,
Alors que Cupidon lui fit oster les flammes
Qui tourmentent là-bas nos pécheresses âmes.**

"The story of the poem is very simple," says the Marquis du Roure. "Cardine espouses Cerberus, and at the marriage feast, appear the principal *filles* of Paris: Marguerite Remy, nicknamed "the big-eyed" (*les gros yeux*); La Picard, crespinière; Anne "of the little bonnet" (*au petit bonnet*); La Normande, the "braggart" (*bragarde*); La Lyonnaise,† "the doubter" (*douteuse*,) etc. Cupid, the sworn enemy of Pluto, appears at the feast to incite the damned to fight against hell and even to strangle Cerberus." The Marquis du Roure sums up the whole work in this apothegm: "Some girls are worse than all the devils together." The editor of 1793 prints also, following the *Enfer de la Mère Cardine*, a piece of the same sort, which gives us the

*Since idleness is mother of all vice,
I here, to add to my own pleasure spice,
Would sing the false treasons and the cruel tricks
Which Cardine did one day beyond the Styx,
When Cupid tempted her to steal the fire
Which there torments our sinful souls with ire.

†The habit of naming women of this sort, or underworld characters in general, after the place from which they come, or are supposed to have come, still persists.

true date of the accompanying poem of Flaminio de Birague: *Deplo-ration et complainte de la mère Cardine de Paris, cy-devant gouvernante de Huleu, sur l'abolition d'iceluy. Trouvée, après le décès d'ecelle Cardine, en un escrain euquel estoient ses plus privez et preceiux secretz, tiltres de ses qualitez authentiques, receptes souveraines, compostes, anthidotes, baulmes, fardz, boetes, ferrements et ustencils servant audict estat dudit mestier* (without name of place, 1570). It will be sufficient to cite two pieces of the same period which were inspired by the execution of the edict of 1560. *La destruction avec la desolation des povres filles de Huleu et de Darnetal* (without place or date, with an engraving in wood on the title page). M. J.-C. Brunet, in his *Manuel du Libraire*, says that this piece of six-syllable verse had been composed about 1520; but we know that M. Brunet is not an authority from the fact that he judges a book from the title page. This *Complainte* is evidently of the same period, if not by the same hand, as the *Complainte de la Mère Cardine*. Another piece which has to do with this great business of the "abolition" of the lupanars is entitled: *Ban de Quelques marchands de Graine à Poile et d'Aucunes Filles de Paris* (without name of place, 1570, in-8). We doubt if a single copy of the original edition has survived, but happily, a bibliophile was found in 1814, to reprint this smutty pleasantry, the author of which, Rasse Deseux, was the surgeon to Charles IX and the friend of Ronsard.

The *abolition des bordeaux*, wholly incomplete as it was, was looked upon so favorably by all France that Charles IX and his chancellor, Michel de l'Hospital, continued in their desire to reform manners by legislation; it would have been easier, however, to expel from within the walls of cities the places of debauchery than completely to expel the prostitutes from the court and from the army. From the most remote times, a princely court, as well as an army, had drawn in its wake a more or less numerous band of evil subjects and lost women. The King, acting in concert with his virtuous minister set about to remedy this abuse. By an edict of the 6th of August, 1570, he ordered

that "all other vagabonds, without masters or occupation, must within twenty-four hours vacate our said court, under pain of being hanged and strangled, without hope of any grace or remission; that all daughters of joy and public women be dislodged from our court within the said time, under pain of the lash and the brand." There were probably a multitude of *filles* who were lashed and branded, for they did not hasten to obey the royal ordinance expelling them, and Charles IX was forced to revive this ordinance a number of times in the course of his reign. Legislation against the prostitutes "following the army" (*suivant l'armée*) met with no fewer difficulties in the way of enforcement, since we find Henri III, upon ascending the throne, hastening to renew it in the same terms: "We enjoin not only the provosts of the marshals and their lieutenants, but also our ordinary judges, to drive out the daughters of joy, if any be found following the said companies, and to chastise them with the lash, and similarly the *goujats*, in case more than one for every three soldiers be found." It is certain that this ordinance was never put into execution, at least in a regular and general fashion; but it was sometimes enforced in a cruel fashion merely through the caprice of the head of the army. For example, if we care to believe the statements of Varillas (*Hist. de Henri III*, Book VI), the Marshal Philippe Strozzi, whom the historian pictures for us as "extremely severe," commanded "that 800 daughters of joy who followed his camp should be cast into the river Loire."

These poor girls were not treated everywhere with so much rigor, and if they were not to be found in the reformers' armies, they led a joyous life in the Catholic armies. Thus, Brantôme describes complacently the fine rear guard which the Duke of Alba, in his expedition against the *Beggars* of Flanders, reviewed with the 10,000 men of his veteran troops. "There were," says Brantôme, "400 courtezans on horseback, handsome and brave as princesses, and 800 on foot, also well fed (*en point aussi*)."
There was there a French gentleman, Messire Francois Le Poulchre, Seigneur de la Motte Messemé, Knight of the Order of the

King, and Captain of fifty of His Majesty's armed men. What he admired the most in this military expedition was the 200 courtezans "*en bon point*," whose duty it appeared to be to safeguard the honor of women and girls in the theater of war. Following is the manner in which he speaks of these creatures, in the seven books of his *Honnetes Loisirs*, dedicated to King Henri III (Paris, Marc Ourry, 1587, 12 mo):

*Il les entretenoit, qui vouloit, tout le jour;
Mais, avec un respect plein de cérémonie,
Le barisiel-major leur tenoit compagnie.
Or, ces dames avoient tous les soirs leur quartier,
Du maréchal de camp, par les mains du fourrier,
Et n'eût-on pas osé leur faire une insolence.**

Their vanity grew to such a point that they came to play the decent women and to demand for their favors a price too lofty for the purse of soldiers. It was necessary for the Duke of Alba to cause a proclamation to be cried in his camp by the heralds at arms:

*Qu'entre elles ne fust pas une qui osat
Refuser désormais soldat qui la priast
De luy payer sa chambre à cinq sols par nuictée.†*

We should not take the rate fixed by the Duke of Alba as the price current of popular Prostitution of this period. However, it is permissible to suppose, from the chapter of Rabelais entitled: "How Panurge Teaches a Manner Wholly New of Building

*He had their company who would, all day,
But only with a ceremonious show,
For the major was their guest, I'd have you know.
The ladies received their rations every night
From the marshal in the quartermaster's sight,
And none there was would have dared to do them wrong.

†That among them none should any longer dare
Refuse a soldier who would pay a fare
Of five sols for a night with her in bed.

the Walls of Paris" (*Comment Panurge Enseigne une Manière Bien Nouvelle de Basir les Murailles de Paris*), that the relaxation of public manners had seriously impaired the immodest trade of street corner prostitutes. "I see," says Panurge, "that the *callibistris** of the women of this country are a better bargain than stones; and so of them the walls should be built, arranging them in a good symmetry of architecture, and placing the largest in the first rank, and then, arranging beneath them the middle sized ones and finally the little ones, sloping down like the back of an ass.† This indecent buffoonery of Panurge assuredly indicates a drop in the price of the *denrées* of debauchery. The closing of the bad houses did not diminish the number of women "of good will." Pierre d'Estoile, in his *Journal de Henri III*, under the date of the 26th of May, 1575, thus describes the corruption which he saw reigning about him, among the bourgeoisie and the people of Paris: "What the prophet Jeremiah says, in his third chapter, of the Daughters of Zion, who went forth with haughty necks and finical eyes, hoisting and shaking themselves and clacking their heels, might, with good and even better reason, have been said in those times of the women of Paris and the maidens of the court. And so it is not to be wondered at if the Lord, according to the threat which he makes in the same place by the mouth of his Prophet, dishevels their heads and their shameful parts by those foolish makers of pasquils with which the city of Paris and the court are filled. In brief, disorder, to speak of nothing worse, was so great that the slander of cuckoldism was one of the most assured sources of revenue in those days." (See the edition published by MM. Champollion, father and son, after the original manuscript of P. de l'Estoile, in the collection of *Mém. pour Servir à l'Histoire de France*.)

We might find undoubtedly, in the works of the poets of the sixteenth century, a large number of passages relating to our

*The Lacroix text has the erroneous reading, *callibristris*.

†(Urquhart and Motteux:) "I see that the sine quo nons, kallibistris, or contrapunctums of the women of this country are better cheap than stones. Of them should the walls be built, ranging them in good symmetry, by the rules of architecture and placing the largest in the first ranks, then sloping downwards ridgewise like the back of an ass."

subject, passages which would permit us to draw a faithful and even minute picture of the manners of Prostitution; but we shall hasten to leave this impure century, in which Italian debauchery is the final sewer for the defilement and extinction of the royal branch of the Valois; we fear being tempted into too long a digression in leafing through these libertine poets who were pleased to found the Parnassus of Priapus, and who found no more inspiring news than the Venus of the street corner. Certainly the poets were authorized to indulge in all the disorders of erotic poetry, when they met at the houses of the prostitutes the greatest lords of the court, princes of the Church, and venerable magistrates. Did not the Cardinal Charles of Lorraine, as though he had been a young scholar, go to pass the night outside of his lodgings in those of a lost woman? Louis Regnier, Sieur de la Planche, tells us, in his *Histoire de Francois II*, that this debauched prelate," emerging one morning from the house of the beauteous Romaine, a renowned courtesan of the time of Henri, who lodged in the Cousture de Sainte Catherine, had missed being mistreated by certain ruffians who were lying in wait for just such prey." This Romaine, who in beauty and libertinism rivalled La Grecque, so exalted by Brantôme, impresses us as being the type of courtesan whom Joachim Dubelloy has introduced into a famous poem entitled sometimes *la Maquerelle ou la Vieille Courtisane de Rome*, and sometimes *la Courtisane Repentie*. This poem supplies us with a number of features which help us in compiling the portrait of courtezans in the mode of the sixteenth century. It is the courtesan herself who relates her life and who, her own youth being past, endeavors to console her own ennui.

*Par les soupirs d'une complainte vaine.**

At the age of sixteen years, corrupted by the bad example of an "immodest mother," she surrenders the flower of her virginity

*By the right of vain complaint.

to a serf; but the thing was kept so secret that no one in the world, except her mother, might suspect the accident:

*Bientôt après, je vins entre les mains
De deux ou trois gentilshommes romains,
Desquels je fus aussi vierge rendue,
Comme j'avois pour vierge esté vendue.
De main en main je fus mise en avant,
A cinq or six, vierge comme devant.**

A prelate later purchases her "as a virgin" (*comme pucelle*); she later learns to sing, to dance, to play the lute and to "speak properly" (*proprement parler*); still later, to rouge and to adorn herself. This prelate loved her so much that he could refuse her no sign of his tenderness. He made her rich, and he ended by marrying her off to a gentleman who despoiled her, immediately after the ceremony, of all she had brought to him as a dowry; she finds herself completely ruined:

*Et rejetant toute vergogne et honte,
J'ouvre boutique; et faite plus savante,
Vous mis si bien ma marchandise en vente,
Subtilement affinant les plus fins,
Qu'en peu de temps fameuse je devins.
Lors, me voyant de Rome assez connue
Pour n'estre au rang de squaldrine tenue,†*

*Shortly thereafter, I became the lass
Of two or three Roman gentlemen; to pass
Myself off as a virgin as I'd been
Was an easy thing, as I have ever seen;
From hand to hand, to five or six, I went
And always as a virgin, rest content.

†And then, rejecting modesty and shame,
I open shop, for you have made me wise,
And I know how to sell my merchandise,
Bidding most subtly for the finest trade,
Till, in a short time, I am famous made.
Seeing Rome herself deigns thus to favor me,
They know I can no common strumpet be,

*De deux ou trois à poste je me mis,
 Lesquels étoient mes plus fermes amis,
 Et tous les mois me donnoient pour salaire
 Un chacun d'eux trente écus d'ordinaire.**

She is not content with these wages, and she employes all sorts of ruses in order to lay a contribution on her three "friends" making each of them believe that she loves him more than the others. They were not young nor handsome, but they were credulous and generous; she, moreover, avoided "more than the plague:"

*Ces jeunes gens, lesquels, sans débourser,
 A tout propos, pour beaux veulent passer,
 Nous pensant bien payer d'une gambade,
 D'une chanson, d'un lut ou d'une aubade.†*

She knew all the mysteries of the lives of courtezans, and she employed them to her own advantage, while giving herself the airs of decency and even of prudery:

*J'avais aussi une soigneuse cure,
 De n'endurer sur mon corps une ordure,
 De boire peu, de manger sobrement,
 De sentir bon, me tenir proprement,
 Fût en public ou fût dedans ma chambre,
 Où l'eau de naffe, et la civette et l'ambre,‡*

*And two or three become my firmest friends,
 Whom I employ to further my own ends,
 Since every month they pay in wages round
 Some thirty crowns, each of them, I'll be bound.

†Young bloods who never spend a cent,
 Yet want to squire us, and think we are content
 With a skip, a gambol or a serenade,
 A moon-sick song beneath a balustrade.

‡For I took always a most thoughtful care
 To keep my body free from soil and fair,
 To drink but little, soberly to eat,
 To smell good, look good and be always neat,
 In public or within my private room,
 Where orange-water, civet and the amber doom

*Le linge blanc, le pennage éventant,
 Et le sachet de poudre bien sentant,
 Ne manquoient point out, je prenois garde
 (Ruse commune à quiconque se farde)
 Qu'on ne me pût surprendre le matin.
 Bref, tout cela qu'enseigne l'Arétin,
 Je le savois, et savois mettre en œuvre
 Tous le secrets que son livre descoeuve,
 Et d'abondant, mille tours inconnus
 Pour éveiller la dormante Venus.**

But how she excelled in hiding her profession! She was "respectable in her remarks" (*honneste en ses propos*); she knew how to "devise" (*deviser*) virtue and she disguised herself so well.

*Que rien qu'honneur ne sortoit de ma bouche,
 Sage au parler et folâtre à la couche.†*

*All fouling odors, with fans and linen white
 And sachet-powder to perfume the night;
 They all are there; above all, I guard well
 (As any one who uses rouge can tell)
 Against the disillusioning surprise
 Of morning light. All Aretino wise
 E'er taught I know, and practice all her ruses
 A woman gains when she his book peruses.
 And a thousand other bonny wiles I know,
 When Venus at awakening is slow.

This bit of verse, which strikes us at first as being decidedly modern, shows us what we have already perceived as far back as the remotest antiquity, that there is nothing new about Mrs. Warren's well known profession. It is to be observed that ladies of fortune and their panderers of today have an almost psychopathic passion for bodily cleanliness. The observation on the disillusioning effect of morning light was probably first made by a *filie de joie* contemporary with the highly respectable Mrs. Adam—if Eve herself did not make it. Orange flower water and civet appear to have been favorites with the ladies of the *cinquecento*, to judge from Aretino. See the *I Ragionamenti*, Second Part, Third Day, the story entitled "The Jealous Husband" in my translation:

*My lady surely is divine;
 She passes orange water and has the stink
 Of musk and ambergis and civet, too, I think.
 Cf., also the story (Second Part, Second Day) "Mona Quinimina":
 In short, you're not divine, I fear,
 Since you don't pass orange water, dear.*

etc., etc.

†That nothing naughty ever left my head,
 But wise in speech and foolish in the bed.

It was by such means that she “acquired favor” at Rome and at Paris, so that gentlemen were not esteemed who could not boast of having “made love” to her,

*Au demeurant, fût de nuit ou de jour.**

We divine that she had nothing to fear from the police laws relative to “lower class” courtezans:

*Je ne craignois d'aller sans ma patente,
Car j'étois franche et de tribut exempte,
Je n'avois peur d'un gouverneur fâcheux,
D'un barisel ou d'un sbire outrageux,
Ni qu'en prison on retînt ma personne . . .
N'ayant jamais faute de la faveur
D'un cardinal ou autre grand seigneur
Dont on voyoit ma maison fréquentée,
Ce qui faisoit que j'estois respectée.†*

She had kept this “fine menage” for six or seven years, when, feeling herself growing old, she began to experience shame and repentance; a sermon which she heard one day brought home to her the scandal of her past life. She became aware of all the bitterness there was in the deceitful pleasures of Prostitution:

*Car, quel plaisir, hélas! me pouvoit estre,
Bien que je prisse à dextre et à senestre,‡*

*By staying with her, night or day.

†I did not fear to go without my pass,
But went scot-free like any freeborn lass;
I did not need to fear the annoying ire
Of governor, bailiff or outrageous squire,
Or that to prison I might have to go
The grace of Church and State I never lacked,
But by some cardinal or lord was backed.
The gentry filled my house by day and night,
And hence it was, I was respected—quite.

Barisel is *barigel*, a (*Italian*) chief constable. It. *bargello*, sheriff or chief constable, low Latin, *barigildus*.

‡What pleasure, right or left, can I now take,
Now that, alas! all pleasures me forsake?

*A'avoir soumis mes membres éhontés
 A l'appétit de tant de volontés,
 Et d'imiter le vivre d'une beste
 Pour m'enrichir par un gain déshonneste! . . .
 Outre la peur (gesne perpétuelle!)
 D'une vérole ou d'une pellarelle,
 Et tout cela dont se trouve héritier
 Qui longuement exerce un tel mestier!**

She then entered a convent to do penance and to cleanse herself of her defilement in the practice of an austere devotion; she had bequeathed to the convent the "profits" (*acquets*) of vice, believing that she had no further need for the goods of the earth. But ennui is not slow in laying hold of her; she repents "of having repented," hurls her nun's frock into the bushes and endeavors to take up her ancient manner of life: it is too late! Adieu the grand siegneurs and perfumed loves! See coming, with the "gouty vérole,"

La dentrelle et pelade honteuse,

see coming the executioner, whom she receives in her bed "in place of a gentleman" and who recompenses her for her favors by himself fustigating her in the public place!

*My limbs I have subjected without shame
 To the appetites of more than I can name;
 The beasts I've imitated in my life,
 For gain dishonest, to grow rich my strife
 This, to say nothing of the haunting fear
 Of syphilis or such a prospect drear
 As I know well all women are heir to,
 Who such a trade too long a time pursue.

(This is the end of Volume V of the original text)

CHAPTER XXXV

IN ALL ages, there have existed intimate relations, striking analogies, singular affinities between French manners and French modes, so that one might, almost for certainty, judge one by the other; when manners are pure, austere and well regulated, the modes are simple, decent and respectable; on the other hand, if the modes are extravagant, dissolute and obscene, manners must be unbridled, corrupt and scandalous. Dress, at every epoch of our national history, has been, so to speak, a faithful mirror of the manners of private life. The mere sight, for example, of the exact costumes of the men and women of the sixteenth century would enable us to recognize, for a certainty, the fact that that century was, of all that had gone before, the most inclined, the most propitious and the most indulgent toward Prostitution.

It would be easy to compile a history of costumes in France, from the point of view of manners, from the most remote times. We shall have to limit ourselves here to seeking in episodic fashion the salient characteristics of what might be called Prostitution in the habiliments of the two sections. We have no desire other than merely to skim through this vast and curious subject; but we shall say enough of it, in this rapid sketch, to establish the point that fashion was always, among our ancestors, a reflection of manners. The mode is ordinarily but a form and an expression of luxury, which has so sorry an influence over public morality, and which opens the gate, so to speak, to all distractions, to all disorders, to all vices. The love of luxury leads to debauchery and counsels Prostitution; it is the attraction and the bait of the evil passions. There is, in a whole people, an ardent and disorderly emulation in the pursuit of evil, when the unique end of all thought and all human action is nothing more than immoderate satisfaction of the senses and of the vanities;

it is then that the mode becomes, simultaneously, a parade of pride and an excitation to incontinence.

Many times have the sovereigns endeavored to impose limits on the outbursts of luxury; they have regulated, by means of sumptuary laws, the dress or the *livery* of each class of citizens; but they have merely preoccupied themselves with the quality and the value of material objects which they have sought to authorize or to interdict; their prescriptions have been, thus, purely economic and political. Sometimes, they have desired that each one be clad according to his rank, and that "by means of habits," as an ordinance of Charles VII phrases the matter, one might be able to recognize the "vocations of folk, either princes, noblemen, bourgeois, merchants or tradesmen;" sometimes they have desired to prevent their subjects from ruining themselves "in habiliments too pompous and too sumptuous, not suitable to their state," as an ordinance of Charles VIII, which goes on to recall the fact that "such abuses are displeasing to God, our Creator;" sometimes they have desired to prevent the country from being impoverished by the purchase of certain stuffs, which would cause a good part of the currency to leave the realm, as an ordinance of Charles IX points out; but they had not appeared concerned with maintaining decency of costume by means of fixed regulations and severe penalties. It has been the business of the ecclesiastical powers to recommend, to demand and to impose modesty of habits; it is this power alone which has possessed the right of condemning, prescribing and anathematizing those modes which are not in harmony with the modesty which the Christian religion commands for all its children. We meet here and there with certain police ordinances, certain decrees of Parliament, which forbid the wearing of *dissolute habits*; but under this head are not designated those immodest habiliments in which the two sexes indulged at desire from a refinement of gallantry and sensuality. The civil law deals only with excesses of luxury; the religious law, and especially the moral law, since the introduction of Christianity among the Gauls, alone has been in posi-

tion to repress the license of fashion and to keep a watch over costumes from the point of view of manners.*

In the first times of the monarchy, men and women wore long and flowing vestments, which dissimulated all movements of the body, and which did not leave any part of the body uncovered. The French had adopted the Roman costume, the toga, the chlamyde and the tunic, while preserving the clout or breeches of the barbaric peoples.†

The dress of women, still more simple than that of men, was composed of a woollen tunic with large folds flowing down over the ankles, with a mantle gathered over the shoulder. They wore, in addition, a long veil, in which they wrapped themselves from head to foot, and which they fastened over the ear with a metal clasp. A woman in those days, no matter what might have been her rank, never showed herself in public unveiled, and was very careful not to display under the veil any outline which might reveal her sex. Love of adornment, that distinctive trait of the nation, was only revealed by a number of massive bracelets, rings, necklaces and jewels of every sort. The woman who was the most laden with gold was the best adorned, and it is easy to understand how this need of expensive brilliancy must sometimes have caused virtue to totter. But the fair sex soon came to be more jealous of its own rights and advantages; the women began to wear tunics, the corsage of which outlined the figure and was tight-fitting around the throat; then, the tunics began to be hollowed out about the throat and down to the shoulders; a little later, in order to give more grace to the stride, the women began to draw up their robe above the girdle in such a manner as to outline the haunches, the thighs and the loins, which before had been lost under the thick folds of the petticoat. However, it does not appear that a woman "of good life" would have dared, prior

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Curious bit of spoofing by the author.

†Late Latin *bracae* (in Mss. also *braccæ*). Originally worn by the Persians, Indians and Germans as well as the Gauls: referred to by Virgil, *Aeneid*, 11,777, as "*barbara tegima crurum.*" Also worn among the Romans in the time of the emperors.

to the 12th century, to affront the gaze of men with a vestment permitting a sight of the breast, the shoulders and the arms.

It was, perhaps, the men who began this relaxation in the decency of national costumes, which Charlemagne endeavored to bring back to the ancient Frankish simplicity. At a synod held at Rheims, in the year 972, Raoul, Abbot of St. Remi, complains of the fact that nuns, drawing their tunics over their haunches and spreading out their legs, resemble from the rear courtesans rather than nuns. (*Arctatis clunibus*, says Richer, in Book III of his *Chronicle*, *et. protensis natibus, potius meretriculis quam monachis tergo assimilentur.*) These same nuns wore immodest (*iniqua*) stockings of an inordinate size, made of material so light that they hid nothing (*ex staminis subtilitate etiam pudenda intuentibus non protegunt.*) From this epoch, slippers *à la poulaine*, *à griffe* or *à bec*, which were pursued for more than four centuries by the anathemas of popes and the invectives of preachers, came into use. These slippers were always looked upon by the casuists in the Middle Ages as the most abominable emblem of immodesty. It is not wholly evident, at first glance of the eye, what there was that was so scandalous about these slippers terminating at the toe sometimes in the claw (*griffe*) of a lion, sometimes in the beak (*bec*) of an eagle, sometimes in the prow (*prow*) of a ship or in some other metal appendage. The excommunication inflicted on this species of footwear was a result of the immodest ingenuity of certain libertines, who were in the habit of wearing poulaines in the form of a phallus. These phallic poulaines were also adopted by the women, who perhaps, were unaware what it was that fashion had decreed they should wear on the tips of their shoes. This poulaine, which was described as "cursed of God" (see the *Glossary* of Ducange, under the word *POULAINIA*), was likewise prohibited by the ordinance of the kings. Nevertheless, great ladies and grand lords did not discontinue to wear poulaines, though more respectable ones, undoubtedly, than those which had so strongly excited the indignation of the Church, and which, according to the expression of the continuator of Guillaume de Nangis, appeared to be animated by the ambitious to

displace the human number; it was for this reason that Charles V, in concert with the Pope of Avignon, Urban V, forbade the use of this villainous footwear. (*Quia res erat valde turpis et quasi contra creationem naturalium membrorum circa pedes, quin imo abusus naturae videbatur.* Continuator Nantii, ann. 1365.). Fashion held its own against royal edicts, since under Louis XI, those of the court still wore poulaines of *un quartier de long* (that is to say, a quarter of an ell in length); it is Monstrelet who gave us this information, or, at least, his continuator. But these poulaines, which had come to be called *becs de canne*, no longer affected obscene forms but only semispiral shapes, like Chinese and Turkish slippers.

To the Crusades must evidently be assigned the alteration of the national costume of France; the modes of the Orient were brought in by the Crusaders along with the silken stuffs of these countries and the young French nobility became effeminate, so to speak, by adopting the habits of Asiatic luxury. There was no longer anything to be seen except cloth of gold (*draps battus d'or*), cloth of scarlet, *riche siglaton* and *samit ouvré* (as the *Chanson d'Antioche* says,) precious furs, embroideries and valances, in place of the rough woollen garments, garments of hair cloth and goat skin and of drugget (*bureau*) which so long had sufficed our ancestors. We have seen how prejudicial this new luxury was to good manners. It might be said with certainty that from this epoch, in particular, the women permitted themselves to be seduced into all the excesses of the toilette. It is from the end of the 12th century that they began renouncing simplicity and chastity of vestments in order to follow with passion the cult of the mode, which became from then on a wholly French divinity. Following are the terms in which the historian, Robert Gaguin, lets himself go against this profane cult, which appeared to have been an invention of the Devil: "this nation," he says, in speaking of the French, "daily given over to pride and debauchery, commits nothing but *sotisses*: sometimes the habits which she adopts are too wide, sometimes they are too narrow, at one time, they are too long, at another too short. Al-

ways avid of novelty, she is unable to preserve for the space of ten years the same form of vestment.” (*Compendium Roberti Gaguini*, Book VIII, Anno 1346.)

It might be said that, throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, there was a sort of tacit understanding between the creators of the mode to *deform* the body of man by ridiculous or monstrous habits (this is what one chronicler, *Gaufredus Vosinsis*, calls *deformatas vestium*), and to give to the creature of God traits borrowed from the Devil which the imagination of painters and image makers had created. Thus, we may look upon the poulaines as an imitation of the cloven hoof commonly attributed to Satan and to his infernal family. Hence, undoubtedly, the wrath of the ecclesiastics against the audacious pretense of achieving a physical resemblance to the Evil Spirit. It was, certainly, to the same source that the mode of the 14th century went to seek its queues and its horns. These horns, “marvelously high and large,” which adorned the coiffure of women on each side of the head, from the time of Charles VI had taken on such a dimension that the doors of rooms were not large enough to permit a wearer of these horns to pass through in comfort. A court preacher fulminated against these horns as his predecessors had against the poulaines: “after his lashing,” related Juvénal des Ursins in his *Chronicle*, “the ladies lifted up their horns and did like the snails, which, when they hear some noise, retire and draw in their horns most beautifully.” The queues, on which the preachers also declared war, made their appearance at the bottom of the robe and at the extremity of the hood. The queues attached to the robes, which Olivier Maillard, in a number of his sermons, refers to as “diabolic inventions,” remained in use at the court under the protection of etiquette. As to the queues on the hoods, which fell down the backs of men and women all the way to the ground, they were drawn up at first on the shoulder and later twined about the neck before cutting them off entirely. It was, perhaps, a Satanic pride which had made claws (*giffes*) queues and horns fashionable; it was probably a depraved taste that counseled men and women to diminish or augment by means

of their attire the portions of certain parts of their bodies. The origin of these deceptions in costume was, it is true, the desire to correct nature in whatever point she might be defective or imperfect. An attempt was naturally made, with the aid of the resources of the toilette, to seek the means of hiding defects of form: the woman who was too thin desired to appear corpulent; the woman who was too corpulent wanted to hide her excessive embonpoint. "The truth is," says Marie de Romieu, in her *Instruction pour les Jenues Dames*, published in 1573, "the truth is, there is need of remedying the defects and imperfections of nature as much as possible." But it is well to recognize the fact that the majority of these exaggerations of the "mould of fashion" (*moule de l'habit*) are the result of a desire to satisfy the instincts and caprices of debauchery, for they all have something to do, by preference, with those parts of the body which play the essential role in the imagination of the licentious. Thus, with women, it is the loins, the haunches, the figure, the thighs, and the throat which, from all times, have especially stimulated the art of the *couturière* and the *lingères*; among men, it is likewise the most indecent members which the industry of the tailor endeavors to put in relief and to reveal to the eyes with a brazen cynicism.

This indecent affectation in the attire of the two sexes was never more evident than at the time of Charles VI, and one is forced to attribute to the coquetry of Queen Isabeau the disorderly fashions of her time, when the Prostitution of manners was so audaciously reflected in the costumes of the court. Christine de Pisan, the "prudish" (*preude*) and chaste Christine, who was then composing her *Trésor de la Cité des Dames*, undoubtedly did not enjoy much prestige in this depraved society, which was little concerned in learning from her "how women of the state should be orderly in their habits." Christine recommended to them expressly not to be "outrageous in their vestments and habiliments, in costumes as in fashions." One of the reasons which she adduced against this immoderate and fashionable luxury was "that a woman, by a disorderly and outrageous habit, oc-

casions another to sin either by imitation or by disordered desire." Sensual desire is, as a matter of fact, one of the evil passions to which the mode addresses itself with the most malice, and Christine de Pisan remarked very wisely that "the most perilous inconvenience which might happen to a woman by reason of a disorderly habit and an indecent manner is the amusement of foolish men who may think that she has the ambition to be coveted and desired for a light love." Following then are the virtuous instructions which she gives the ladies and demoiselles, who do not greatly profit from it: "it is therefore the duty of every woman who would guard her good renown to be decent and without disguise in her habit, which should not be too constricted nor with too great collars nor other indecent fashion, nor should she be a great seeker of new things, especially those which are not decent. And with all this, manner and countenance do much. Where there is nothing that more detracts from a woman than an ugly and unsober manner; likewise there is nothing more pleasant than a beautiful countenance and a coy mien."

But in spite of these sage and honorable counsels, the contemporaries of Christine de Pisan were not content with their *hennins* or high bonnets to the ears, adorned with horns, with their robes with training queues, with their *surcots*, or narrow corsages, with their *souliers à poulaines* and all the trappings of their *estats de bombans*; they set themselves to show that they were *en bon poinct*. The poet of the court of Charles VI, Eustache Deschamps, in his poem entitled the *Mirouer de Mariage*, encourages those demoiselles in search of husbands to adopt the robes "of new make" (*de nouvelle forge*), with large open collars, made in such a manner as to render "more apparent" the bosom and the throat.

But although thinness was rarer among women formerly than it is today, there were also thin women who would have looked upon themselves as dishonored if they had not achieved by means of artifice the embonpoint which they lacked. This was, it is true, the infancy of the age of "false appliances" (*faux*

appas), which, from that time down to our day, have not ceased to constitute an essential part of the toilette. The poet Eustache Deschamps, in his poem on the *Mirouer de Mariage* is careful not to forget them; he even takes the pains to indicate the means of manufacturing them, with "two sacks," thus practically propelling the conditions of a modern corset well stuffed.

This is not all; a woman in the mode had to make her haunches stand out and give to her posterior outlines as much amplitude and prominence as nature might permit. The least artificial process consisted in girdling the figure tightly so that the loins might appear larger and better developed under the bust, which was narrowed by a flat and closely adhering corsage.

Eustache Deschamps describes this process with as much detail as though he had studied poetry with a *tailleur de robes*. According to his description, the robe of a woman of fashion had to be "narrow in the loins," very much stuffed about the loins, puffed in the rear and set off with that accessory known as the "bustle" (*tournure*); less ample below the knees and falling thoroughly well (*à fond de cuve*) over the feet.

The manuscript miniatures of the time permit us to form an idea of the strange appearance which such robes gave women, with a stiff appearance and a disgraceful silhouette.

In this system, the breast was entirely uncovered, *pectus discopertum usque ad ventrem*, as Olivier Maillard says in one of his sermons. This species of robe, open in the front down to the belly, had been conceived by Queen Isabeau, and the people, who were indignant at this outrageous mode, had nicknamed these the robes *à la grand-gore*; they also applied the name of *gorières* to the women who wore them, and they regarded as public women those who did not take the precaution of closing with an *affiche*, or metal brooch, the opening in their corsage.

From the end of the 14th century, there was always in the modes of women an intention, more or less queerly marked, of showing what one pretended to want to hide.

If the license of manners at this epoch induced immorality of costume, if the love of luxury was the principal agent of Prostitution, it must nevertheless be remarked that gallantry found therein a good chance to teach women the proper care of their bodies,* women who before had been very unclean and very thoughtless of their persons. A popular proverb, reported and commentated by Beroalde de Verville, in his *Moyen de Parvenir*, proves clearly enough that decent women could pride themselves on never indulging in secret ablutions. According to this obscene proverb, the courtesans were the only ones who did not limit themselves to washing their faces and hands. It was, evidently, the desire and need of pleasing which taught ladies and demoiselles to keep themselves "very clean and very proper" (*bien nettes et bien propres*), to perfume themselves and to combat with good odors the nauseous emanations of human infirmity. It would appear, however, that certain needs of the toilette were looked upon at first with reproof by the national prejudice, and that their employment was for a long time frowned upon; but if the women surrounded with the deepest mysteries these delicacies of the toilette, they did not fear to confess the use which they made of rouges and odors, which had won them the nickname of "lilies" (*muguettes*). It was not until the 16th century that proper care of the body became an essential condition of feminine beauty. Marie de Romieu, in her *Instruction pour les Jeunes Dames*, does not blush to invite the ladies to "keep themselves very clean, if only for the satisfaction of themselves or a husband." She expresses herself upon this subject as a woman who has recognized the fact that water does not exist merely for the shame of her sex; "there is no need," she says, "as some whom I know, who have no care to keep themselves clean except in those parts which may be seen, remaining filthy and unclean in those parts which are under linen. But as I see it, a beautiful demoiselle should bathe herself frequently in water in which have been boiled good odors, for there is nothing more certain

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf., the current cant relative to athletics, etc., among the modern lightly dressed flappers.

than that the flower of a young lady's beauty is the ability to keep herself clean." It may be seen, in the *Controverses du Sexe Masculin et Féminin* of Gratian du Tont, Seigneur de Drusac, published in 1630, that, notwithstanding the natural laws of propriety the women employed odors rather than clear water; they thus merely increased the bad odor which they wished to disguise. The Seigneur de Drusac says that some, the fat ones especially, wore perfumed sponges

*Entre leurs cuisses et dessoubz les aisselles,
Pour ne sentir l'espaule de mouton,
Le faguenas et telz senteurs infames. . . .**

It is necessary to read these *Controverses* in order to form an idea of the bodily impropriety of the majority of the women, and especially of the good women, despite their curious quest of perfumes, which they, in any case, did not look upon as a dishonor. The Seigneur de Drusac reports, among their *grandes habiletez*, that they frequently wore drawers, or *tire brayes*, when they danced the Lombard or gaillarde dances, and these drawers, invented "to keep the bowels from falling," were ordinarily full of soil and smelled worse than a latrine (*retrait*). Was not this a marvelous preservative of their virtue?

The baths of river water, cold or tepid, were scarcely in use at all before the 17th century; baths were only taken in rich houses upon a return from a journey or at the moment of sitting down to table. We see, in the *Chronique Scandaleuse de Louis XI*, that this King, going to sup and lodge at the houses of some good bourgeois of Paris, always found there a hot bath in waiting. But nothing was less general than this sort of luxurious bath. One was ordinarily content with vapor baths, for which one went to the sweating rooms. These public establishments became multiplied at Paris, about the 12th century, and were greatly in vogue up to the end of the 16th century, when they

*Between the thighs and under the armpits, in order not to smell like a shoulder of mutton, with all sorts of infamous odors.

were wholly abandoned, one does not know why. There were no other baths, and no others were desired. It was an imitation of Oriental habits which the Crusaders had brought into France. But the women, those at least who looked to their reputation, did not go to the sweating rooms. One met there only chambermaids, "godmothers," women of evil life. "Also," remarked Christine de Pisan, "baths, sweating rooms and resorts of godmothers (*commèrages*) are too much haunted by women, and such companies, without necessity or good cause, are but superfluous expense, without any good being able to come of them, and from all such things and others like them, woman, if she is wise, and loves honor, and wishes to avoid blame, should guard herself." It is evident from a multitude of statements which are all in agreement that a woman who frequented the sweating rooms did so at the expense of her moral purity. That is why these sweating rooms were all very like houses of Prostitution.

The men might pride themselves on being harder to please in the matter of cleanliness than the women; they were also less given to odors (*senteurs*) and to rouge (*fardements*). They came to model themselves, however, in matters of fashion and the toilette, after the sex which was always the sovereign arbiter of these *mondanités*. At an epoch, when luxury of habits was accompanied by depravation of manners, the men as well as the women were pleased, according to the expression of Dulaure, to "disfigure their bodies" (*défigurer le nu*) and to make over, so to speak, the work of the Creator under the inspiration of an indecent or libertine idea. Thus, when the women devoted their attention to emphasizing the outlines of their bosoms, of their thighs, of their loins, and even of their bellies, the men, Monstrelet tells us, "took to wearing their robes shorter than they ever had done before, so that one might see the fashion of their buttocks and their genital parts, as was the habit of dressing apes, which was a very unfortunate and very immodest thing. They wore also on their doublets great pads to show that they were large in the shoulders." These *mahoîtres* were a sort of

cushion which augmented the breadth of the shoulders and upper arms. The sparest dandy (*muguet*) thus gave himself the appearance of a Hercules.* Masculine vanity did not stop there. "Under the reign of Charles VII, were to be seen everywhere," says M. Ludovic Lalanne, in the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de la France* (article on COSTUMES), "along with the fashion of artificial or cushioned shoulders called *mahoitres*, from which hung slashed sleeves, the fashion also of *eraguettes*, or sheaths, which were gathered at the top of the stockings and which adorned with fringes and ribbon stuffs."

The historians of fashion speak only with an extreme reserve of that part of the *haut de chausses*, or rather of that bizarre appendage which was called *braguette*† or *brayette* in the 15th and 16th centuries, and which it would be difficult to regard as a historic mode if it were not to be found in the ancient pictures and engravings. It was in the beginning a leather purse or sheath, entirely separate from the smallclothes, to which it was fastened by means of knots or aglets. It is obvious that this singular vestment was at first only worn by the people; but it was found convenient, and as soon as the eyes grew accustomed to it, the bourgeoisie and the nobility in succession did not disdain to make use of it. Soon all men, whatever their rank, the king as well as the street porter, were sporting the *braguette* and displaying it to the glances of the ladies who were no longer offended by it. The origin of the *braguette* goes back undoubtedly to defensive armor, and one might read, on this subject, a chapter of the *Pantagruel* (Book III) entitled: Why the *Braguette* is the First Piece of Harness with Warriors (*Comment la Braguette est la Première Pièce de Harnois Entre Gens de Guerre*). When warriors were covered from head to foot with plates or rings of iron, a box of metal, lined on the inside with a sponge, was used to protect their natural parts; this box came to be

*Padded shoulders come and go with us today. Back in the early years of the present century, for example, when "peg-top" trousers were the vogue, shoulders were stuffed to look like those of a football tackle.

†And which furnished Rabelais with an excuse for so much good fooling—almost as good fooling as the *torchecul* provided.

replaced by a steel lattice and later by a leather purse. The leather gave way to wool and silk, when the braguette became an article of civil attire, and to draw to it the more the attention of persons who no longer thought of being scandalized at the sight of it, it was enlivened with ribbons, with gilt trimmings and even with jewels. A passage of the *Gargantua*, in which Rabelais describes minutely the costume of his hero, gives an exact idea of the effect produced by one of these monstrous braguettes, which were "full," he says, "only of wind." One should not forget that the *Gargantua* was an enormous giant, who *compissait* on the Parisians from the top of the towers of Notre Dame: "For his braguette were taken sixteen ells and a quarter of the same material (white estamet) and the form of it was that of a buttress, joyously well attached to two handsome buckles of gold, with two hooks of enamel, in each of which was set a great emerald of the size of an orange-apple. For, (as Orpheus says, *libro de Lapidibus*, and Pliny *libro ultimo*) it had virtues erective and conformative to the natural member. The exiture (opening) of the braguette was of the length of a cane, slashed like smallclothes, with blue damask in the front. But seeing the beautiful border of *canetille* and the pleasant meshings of goldsmith work, garnished with fine diamonds, fine rubies, fine turquoises, fine emeralds and Persian pearls, you would have compared it to a beautiful cornucopia, such as those you see at the antiquaries and such as Rhea gave the two nymphs, Adrastea and Ida, the nurses of Jupiter: always gallant, succulent, *resudant*, always verdant, always flourishing, always fructifying, full of humors, full of flowers, full of fruits, full of all delights. I vow to God but it was good to see!" Rabelais concerns himself so frequently with braguettes in the course of his joyous romance, that we may gather the important role they played in the world. Rabelais even speaks of a book which he had composed "on the dignity of braguettes!"

These terrible braguettes* held their own and were displayed in public down to the reign of Henri III, when tailors had the modesty to conceal them in the economy of the smallclothes *a la suisse* or *a la martingale*; their name merely remained attached to the mobile part, less apparent and more modest, which was a one-piece with the vestment, and which was always closed with eyelets. Moreover, in the course of the 16th century, the costume of men, without becoming once more long and flowing, affected a decency which it never had before, although old men and libertines still preserved the ancient braguette, "that vain and futile model of a member which we do not even dare to name with decency, but of which we ever make a show and parade in public" (*Essais* of Michel de Montaigne, Book I, Chapter 22). Padded vestments were the mode, but it appears that no indecent thought was attached to this mania of placing cotton everywhere and thus puffing out the bust, the paunch, the buttocks and the loins with whalebone and with cushioned pads. We have read, however, that the Italian manners, which then were prevalent at the court of France, were alone responsible for this show of rounded and provocative forms, which the young debauchees liked to find in women. The latter, at least, were faithful to the traditions of their sex by showing as much of the throat as possible and by disputing among themselves the attributes of Venus Callipyge. The *Vertugales* and the *basquines* were then invented and created a furore. A commentator of the *Satyre Ménippée* (edition of Ratisbonne, 1726, Volume II, page 388) says that these vertugales had been conceived by the courtezans "to hide their pregnancies." And so, when decent women began to revive and adopt the vertugales, a friar who was then preaching at Paris, remarked in his sermon that the ladies had quitted their *vertu* but that the *gale* had remained. (See the *Apologie pour*

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Icel. Bragga, to adorn; O. F. Brague, merriment; Armor. Braga, to flaunt; W. Bragiaw, to swell out; Gael. Breagh, fine, pretty, splendid: whence our Brag. Cf. O. Eng. Braget and Bragot; W. Bragawd; Corn. Bregawd, to swell out: whence our noun Bragget, a fermented liquor. Cf. also Eng. Brail, a piece of leather to bind up a hawk's wing; from O. Eng. Brayle, from O. F. Braye, breeches, from O. F. Braiel (Braiol, Braioel) a band placed about the loins.

Hérodote of H. Estienne, Volume I, page 310, edition of Le Duchat.). This fashion was already at the height of its vogue in 1550; a moral and facetious poet published about that time the satire, or *Blason des Basquines et Vertugales, avec la Belle Remonstrance q'Ont Fait Quesques Dames, Quand on Leur a Remontré qu'il n'en Falloit Plus Porter*. This piece enjoyed sufficient popularity to excite the satiric verve of imitators; one composed and published the *Complainte de Monsieur le C. . . ., Contre les Inventeurs des Vertugales*; another, the *Response de la Vertugale au C. . . ., en Forme d'Invective*. These large pads which the women wore under their robes and about their loins had assumed metaphorically a grosser name, which was prevalent in ordinary speech for more than forty years. When a lady wished to go out, she would say to her chambermaids: "Bring me my behind!" And the chambermaids who went to look for it would say to one another: "Madame's behind is not to be found! Madame's behind is lost!" (See the *Dial, du Nouveau Langue Francois Italianisé* by H. Estienne, edition of Antwerp, 1579, page 202.) We read also in the *Satyre Ménippée*, written in 1593: "similarly was it enjoined on women to wear great behinds (*culs*) and to enjoy themselves in all security beneath them, without fearing the babbling of the midwives."*

The smutty word of which the greatest ladies did not hesitate to make use in designating their basquines and their vertugales, had been created by the people, who found it difficult to become accustomed to such a mode. Evil tongues pursued with smutty and insulting remarks those vertugales which dared to make their appearance in the streets and on the promenades. One of these *brocards* ran:

*Cf. our *fin-de-siècle* "bustle."

. . . *O la gente musquine!*
Qu'elle a une belle basquine!
Sa vertugalle est bien troussée
*Pour estre bientôt engrossée!**

The other ran:

. . . *O quel plaisir,*
Qui pourroit tenir à loisir
Ceste busquée si mignonne,
Qui a si avenante trogne!†

The anonymous author of the *Blason des Vertugales* makes war on these articles from the Christian point of view and pictures them as "infamous and dissolute" (*dissolutions et infâmes*), serving but to engender scandal and bring folk to damnation. He even attempts to prove that every woman who dishonors herself by this dissolute mode is a lecheress (*paillard*) or a gossip (*medisant*) or an "evil maquerelle" or an adulterous wife. The author of the *Complainte* treats the thing with less severity; he complains merely that the vertugale exposes the virtue of women still more to assaults and perils against which the *cottes serées* would at least protect it. He relates, in the freest terms, the complacent role which the vertugale played when a gallant desired to arrive at his ends: he assumes that Lucifer, or his servant, Fricasse, must have undoubtedly invented a mode so favorable to debauchery in order to compromise the modesty of women by causing them to fall over backwards:

*Oh, the naughty lass!
 What a pretty skirt she has!
 Her farthingale is right in tune
 To make her pregnant very soon.

†Oh, what pleasure
 To hold upon your knee at leisure
 That little dear of busked grace,
 With the prepossessing face!

*Depuis qu'on les a inventées,
On voit les femmes effrontées
Et, si elles font renversure,
On les voit jusqu'à la fressure.**

The vertugale, in its *Réponse à Monsieur le C. . .*, does not spare the villain who has indulged in an invective against it; it says its say with an incredible freedom and expatiates with pride on its own merits:

*Faicte je suys pour grandes dames
Vertueuses de corps et d'ames,
Faicte je suys pour damoiselles
Qui ont vers leurs marys bons zelles.
Je dis qu'une femme de bien,
Pour avoir meilleur entretien
Et plaire plus fort à son homme,
Me veust porter, voyre dans Rome,
Non pas une femme commune
Qui change ainsi comme la lune. . .
Bien venue suys en la court,
Pourceu que l'argent ne soit court.
Là tout le monde me salue,
Là je suys le très bien venue!†*

*Since these objects saw the light,
Women have been brazen quite,
And if one fell upon her back,
You'd see the whole way to her crack.

†Made am I for ladies great,
Of soul and body immaculate;
Made am I for a damoiselle
Who wishes her husband very well;
And I will even dare to say
That she who would enjoy love's way
And greatly please her man at home,
She ought to wear me, even in Rome;
For I'm no strumpet, you'll see soon,
Who changes thus with every moon
I'm always welcome in the court,
When the silver is not short
Yea, all the world salutes me there,
And I am welcome, I'll declare!

The author of the *Réponse* does not admit, then, that the vertugales may be misused, and this mode, the invention of which he attributes to a "wise man" (*homme sage*) is boldly justified in the face of the reproaches which had been heaped upon it of being more suited to women of disorderly life. He goes back to the source of this calumny and relates that a vertugale, having been stolen by a procurer (*citadoux*) arrived at a bad house in the Champ-Gaillard and was given as a present to a *fille d'amour*, who dared to adorn herself with it to go to mass and to "raise a fanfare" in the open street. But this girl, not knowing how to wear this accoutrement, which was new to her, had no sooner set her foot out of doors, than she fell on her rear and remained for an hour and a half in a very embarrassing position:

*Et lors monstroît ses gringuenauldes,
Plus dures que les baguenaudes
Qui pendoient de son cul infect.**

The vertugales, at least, were wholly innocent of the villainous sights which their indiscretion sometimes committed, for they had been conceived, so it is said, only to permit the air to circulate beneath the robes, and to preserve there a fresh temperature, being thus as salutary in preserving the health of the bodies as it was useful in repressing the ardor of the senses. This destination of the vertugales is plainly indicated in these verses of the *Complainte*:

*Mauldits soient ces beaux inventeurs,
Ces coyons, ces passementeurs
De vertugalles et basquines,
Que portent un tas de musquines
Pour donner air à leur devant!†*

*And then she showed the dirty ruts,
Harder far than bladder-nuts
On her unclean behind.

†Cursed be those dastard chaps
Who invented all these traps,
These farthingales and skirts,
For they have led a lot of flirts
To take the air in front!

The *vertugales* served also to hide a pregnancy for five or six months and to preserve in pregnant women the appearance of a fine and gracious figure. It would appear, from a passage in the *Dialogues du Langue François Italianisé*, that this mode, which singularly developed the circumference of the belly and the loins, did not at first have for object the developing of a posterior *embonpoint* on women who lacked it, for, in the middle of the 16th century, the thin ones were more esteemed than the fat ones. "The Venetian ladies," says the Frenchman who figures in the *Dialogues*, "seek by all means to be not only *en bon poinct*, but fat (and they tell me that, for this purpose, they use, among their viands, much of the Indian nut, and you know that our own hate and flee that." To express the fact that all was not cotton and padding in the *vertugales* of a woman, one praised her by making use of this Italianism: *C'est une bonne robbe!** But the *messieurs* prided themselves on loving flesh and not fat, an idea that is well brought out in this profession of faith on the part of a debauched Latinist: *Carmarius sum, pinguarius non sum*. The *vertugales* were abandoned under the reign of Louis XIII, but they reappeared at long intervals with less fantastic proportions under the names of *vertugadin*, *paniers*, *nustucru*, *tournure*, etc. These *vertugales* brought back with them an ancient custom which had less to do with cleanliness than with modesty: women resumed wearing drawers (*calçons*) in order to protect themselves against cold and dust, as well as the shame which might come to them if they suffered a fall. Moreover, "these drawers," as the "Italianized" Frenchman of the *Dialogues* of Henri Estienne remarks, "assured them also against certain dissolute young fellows, for, upon putting their hands under them, they were not able to touch the flesh."

It is our opinion that the fashion of drawers for women was essentially French, for this mode, already introduced at court about the end of the 14th century, was recommended by reasons of utility and decency. But the fashion of open robes, *décolleté*

**Buona roba*: (our modernism) "good stuff." Cf. Old German *roub*, "booty."

and open-breasted, which held sway so audaciously throughout the 16th century, had been naturalized in France along with Italian manners under the reign of Francis I. At this period, the people applied the epithet of *dames a la grand 'gore* to those women who wore robes open over the bosom; the people had then no more than a vague memory of those *robes a la grand 'gore* which had scandalized them so when Isabeau of Bavaria had brought them into fashion. It was evidently Italy which set the example of this new abuse of throat-nudity. A facetious bit, printed in 1612, and having for title *la Mode qui Court et les Singularites d'Icelle*, authorized us in crediting such an accusation against "Chouse." This was the name given to Italianized France.

"Chouse," says the author of *La Mode qui Court*, "has also conceived the idea of representing the breasts as bounding and elevated by implements in the front, for whoever may care to see, as a pastime, and according to this, one says:

*Jeanne, qui fait de son teton parure,
Fait veoir à tous que Jeanne veut pasture.**

The poets and the romancers of that time all speak to us of the prodigious untidiness which favored the use of corsets equipped with steel stays, with whalebone and with wire. In the *Discours Nouveau de la Mode*, an excellent satire in verse published in 1613, the anonymous author, after having given us, without too much repugnance, a picture

D'un large sein le tetin bondissant,†

informs us that, if, through a remnant of modesty, the "wife of the bourgeois" still employed "*points coupes*" and "*ouvrages*

* (Freely:)

Jeanne who thus adorns her teat

Makes known to all that she is meat.

(Our modern "meat" being equivalent to "pasture" here.)

† Of a large breast, with bounding teat.

de prix" to cover her throat, instead of having as before, "the top of the robe closed, with a buckle, the ladies of quality,

. . . *Au moins pour la plus part, m'ont cure
D'avoir en cest endroit aucune couverture;
Elles aiment bien mieux avoir le sein ouvert
Et plus de la moitié du tetin decouvert;
Elles aiment bien mieux, de leur blanche poitrine,
Faire paroistre à nud la candeur albastrine,
D'ou elles tirent plus de traits luxurieux
Cent et cent mille fois, qu'elles ne font des yeux.**

It might be said that never, at any epoch, had women of high station devoted so much attention to the art of acquiring a beautiful growth and of appearing *en bonne conche*, as one said then; the thinnest of them found a means of displaying the likeness of an embonpoint which reposed upon padded cushions; the fattest did not seek to dissimulate the enormity of their "*tablature*," according to an equivocal expression borrowed from a musical notation of the times. Even the old ones did not feel that they should be exempt from this indecent abuse of throat-nudity. The *Divorce Satyrique* pictures for us Queen Marguerite, at the age of fifty or fifty-five years, going to receive holy communion three times a week, "her face plastered and covered with rouge, with a great uncovered throat which more properly resembled a behind than a bosom." (See the *Div. Satyr.*, following the *Journal de l'Estoile*, edition of 1744, Volume IV, page 511.) And yet Brantôme, in his *Dames Galantes*, which he caused to be read in manuscript to Queen Marguerite, does not appear to fear a disagreeable allusion to this Princess, when

*At least the most of them do not care
For any sort of covering there;
They'd leave the breast quite unconcealed
With the better half of the teat revealed,
For with their bosoms white as cream,
They rival alabaster's gleam,
And win by far more manly hearts
Than ever eyes with all their darts.

he speaks undisguisedly of certain women "opulent in flabby teats, more pendant than those of a cow suckling her calf." Brantôme adds pleasantly that, if some goldsmith were to take a model of these *grandes tetasses* to make of them two golden cups, these cups would resemble "true troughs, like the round wooden ones in which they feed hogs."

It was not only the preachers and confessors who condemned these nudities, philosophers and moralists also counselled women not to lose a part of the natural advantages by leaving nothing to be desired by the eyes. "Satiety engenders disgust," remarked Montaigne (*Essais*, Book II, Chapter XV); "it is a soft, doltish, tired and sleepy passion." Then, as though he had not seen those objects which fashion brazenly exposed to all eyes, Montaigne goes on to imagine that the ladies of the court of Henri III were still clad as simply and as decently as the Roman maidens: "Why," he inquires, in his naïve preoccupation, "why do they veil down to the ankles those beauties which each one desires to show, which everyone desires to see? Why do they cover with so many concealments, one upon another, those parts where chiefly lodges our desire of theirs?" Montaigne, who had not noticed this perpetual display (*monstre*) of the naked bosom among his contemporaries, had, however, perceived the monstrous proportions of the vertugales, the result of a coquetry of a wholly different sort; for Montaigne demands of them with a malicious good humor: "Of what use are those gross bastions with which our ladies have come to arm their flanks, except to lure our appetite by difficulty and to draw us to them even while they keep us at a distance?" One is tempted to believe that modesty at that time consisted less in hiding certain parts of the body than in exaggerating the form under veils which set the form off all the better. Prostitution, it is true, had its part in all the curiosities of fashion, and, as Brantôme has the audacity to prove by anecdotes in a chapter entitled *De la Veüe en Amour*, the eyes were always the corrupters of the soul and the accomplices of the imagination. Habit, however, had undoubtedly

diminished the indecency of these nudities, which did not offend the sight of the gravest men when they formed an indispensable accessory to the great toilet of the court. Thus we see at the Château de Chanonceux Catherine de Medici giving a feast served by half-clad maids of honor. The memoirs of the time acquaint us with a multitude of analogous circumstances; nothing was more ordinary than to see, in the ballets, at the masquerades, and at the banquets, women figuring as nymphs and goddesses, their scattered hair floating down over their shoulders, their breasts uncovered to the girdle, their legs and thighs nude, the rest of the body being well marked under a supple or transparent material. Many similar examples might be traced back with ancient solemn entries (*entrées*) of the kings and queens (for in those days, the people were not indignant at beholding upon the scaffolds erected in the streets and on the street corners of Paris, certain "mysteries," or allegorical tableaux, represented by men and women entirely naked); and so, it would seem that nudity was not looked upon as an outrage to modesty, when disengaged from all indecent ideas, and from all carnal concupiscence. Gabrielle d'Estrées had herself painted a number of times, "after nature" by the painters in ordinary to the King, Raimond Dubreuil and Martin Freminet, in the simple attire of a bather, emerging from or entering the bath; but what took away from these naïve pictures any suspicion of a libertine or even voluptuous thought, was the fact that the mistress of Henri IV, in having herself painted wholly nude, never neglected to have placed at the bottom of the canvas the nurses and the cradles of her children.*

The nudity of the throat was, then, at this epoch, merely an indispensable ornament of the costume, and no one, except the ecclesiastics and the Protestants thought any wrong of it. The majority of the fine portraits in three colors which Dumoustier and his imitators executed at the end of the 16th century, indicate the prevalence of this mode, which attained from then on

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf., the subtle devices of our modern producers of "music revues."

its climax; for the robes, at least those of gala occasions, were open in such a manner as to reveal half the breast, and sometimes the shoulders and the upper arms as far as the armpits, with a view of the back down to the shoulder blades. Court etiquette authorized this forgetfulness of all modesty, which public morality and religion at once condemned, without being able to work a reform which would seem to have been so much in the interest of manners. The women who went to church to listen to a discourse against dissolute habits did not fear to sit with uncovered bosom under the eyes of the preacher. They attributed to the rigorism of the Huguenots the continual warfare which the Church made on these pomps of Satan and vanities of the world. It was, as a matter of fact, Geneva which began pursuing with its anathemas these indecent fashions. In the year 1551, a friend of Calvin published, without attaching his name, a *Chrestienne instruction touchant la pompe et excez des hommes desbordez et femmes dissolues, en la curiosite de leurs parures et attiffements d'habits*. This work had been, a few years later, revised for the special use of Calvinists, under the title: *Traite de l'Estat Honneste des Chrestiens en Leur Accors-trement* (Geneva, Jean de Laon, 1580, in-8), and for the use of Catholics by Jérôme de Chastillon, under the following title: *Bref et Utile Discours sur l'Immodestie et Superfluite des Habits* (Lyons, Seb. Gryphius, 1577, in-quarto). The Catholic casuists concerned themselves preferably with reprimanding luxury from the point of view of pride; the heterodox were more pre-occupied with chastity and decency, when they attacked the "dissoluteness" of habits. We must, therefore, recognize a good and austere Protestant in Francois Estienne, who caused to be printed at Paris in 1581 a small treatise on sumptuary morality entitled *Remonstrance Charitable aux Dames et Damoiselles de France, sur Leurs Ornaments Dissolus, pour les Induire a Laisser l'Habit du Paganisme et Prendre Celui de la Femme Pudique et Chrestienne*. But the Catholic theologians became piqued and left nothing to the Protestants in the way of denouncing to the

contempt of pious persons those frightful nudities which père Jacques Olivier did not forget in his *Alphabet de l'Imperfection et Malice des Femmes* (Paris, 1623, 12 mo.). This crusade of the ecclesiastical writers against nudity continued without interruption throughout the whole of the 17th century, and we may indicate, as one of the most disputed results of this crusade, the imprisonment of a part of the bosom and shoulders in the corsage of the robe. We should not lose sight of the fact that the implacable enemies of immodest apparel had here attacked a delicate point of their controversy. Polman is the first to break the ice, in publishing *Le Chancre ou Couvre-sein Féminin* (Douai, 1635, in-8); after him, Pierre Juvernay touched again on the question in his *Discours Particulier sur les Femmes des Braillées de ce Temps* (Paris, Lemur, 1637, in-8). This discourse met with success, without anyone being able to say to what species of readers it owed this success; but in 1640, the fourth edition appeared with this new title: *Discours Particulier Contre les Filles et les Femmes Decouvrant Leur Sein et Portant des Moustaches*. All had not been said upon this subject, since an anonymous writer, in whom there has been an attempt to recognize the Abbé Jacques Boileau, doctor at the Sorbonne and brother of the great satirist, finally published the masterpiece in this time: *Le l'Abus des Nudités de la Gorge* (Brussels, 1675, 12 mo.). The second edition (Paris, 1677, 12 mo.) is augmented with the *Ordonnance des Vicaires Généraux de Toulouse Contre la Nudité des Bras, des Épaules et de la Gorge*. The Marquis of Roure has given, in his *Analecta-Biblion*, a curious analysis of this celebrated treatise, in which the author examines, in the course of 113 paragraphs, the “nuisance and culpability” (*nuisance et culpabilité*) of the nudity of the shoulders and of the throat: “Do not the women know,” inquires the Marquis de Roure in his analysis, “that the sight of a beautiful bosom is not less dangerous to us than that of a cockatrice? — When one displays such things, it can only be with an evil design. — If the women and girls cared to remember what Saint John Chrys-

tostom says, they would cover themselves. — Do they wish to be pleasing to libertines? But they merely become their victims. Do they wish to please honest folk? But then they would cover themselves. — Woman is a temple of which purity holds the keys. — That her discourse should be chaste and her adornment should not be, what an inconsistency. — A nude bosom and shoulders speak more loudly than any discourse. — God compares the corrupt nation to the woman who elevates her bosom in order to show Him more grace. — Cover yourselves then, but wholly, and do not cover this to uncover that.”

This polemist of the Sorbonne ended by drawing the court of Rome into the controversy, and by deciding Pope Innocent XI to launch a bull of excommunication against the abuse of throat-nudity; but at this period, the Church was no longer, as in the 16th century, interested in questions of life and death. It is easy to understand, then, how the licentious modes of this century, so inveighed against by Protestant writers, should have practically escaped the censure of the Catholic theologians who did not descend to these petty details of mundane life, but who fortified themselves rather in the cloudy spheres of dogma; but there were moralists who posed as defenders of public decency and who showed no grace to the shameful excesses (*déborderment*) of costume. The venerable Jean des Caurres, principal of the college of Amiens, that singular prototype of Michel de Montaigne, frequently refers to the indecency of costume among his contemporaries, in the voluminous collection of his *Oeuvres Morales et Diversifiées en Histoires* (Second edition, Paris, G. de la Noue, 1584, in-8, 1,396 pages.) Sometimes he cries: “The disguise is so great and superfluous that today one takes the woman for the man and the man for the woman without any difference in costume!” Sometimes he blames the mirrors which the “masked demoiselles and courtezans” (*courtisanes et damoiselles masquées*) wear at their girdles, and which he calls “mirrors of blemishes hanging over the belly” (*mirouers de macule pendans sur le ventre*); “And it was pleasing to the

goodness of God that it should be permitted to all persons to call those who wear them lecheresses and whores (*paillardes et putains*), in order to correct them! . . . Let anyone read all the divine, human and profane histories, and he will not find that the immodest ones and the meretrices have ever worn them in public before down to this day which the Devil has let loose on France!"

The honest Jean des Caurres frequently recurs to this usurpation of sexual costume and to the disguise of the sex by means of the habit; he becomes indignant, for example, at seeing "girls and women wearing robes and cloaks after the fashion of the man, which is a habit very unseemly for the said girls and women, and one forbidden by God in Deuteronomy, where he says: *Non induetur mulier veste virili, nec vir utetur veste femineâ; abominabilis enim apud Deum est.*" But the courtiers of Henri III, in imitation of the King and his mignons, had carried still further than the women this shameful masquerade, in which they sought to preserve nothing of the characteristics or attributes of their sex. We shall have more to say of this in the chapter which we are forced to devote to the coterie of *hermaphrodites*.

Brantôme, who was not a moralist, although he was an abbot like Jean de Caurres, also makes us acquainted with some of the fashionable excesses of his time; but he cites these excesses and expands upon them with an indulgence which reflects the looseness of his own manners. He reports, without being moved, without becoming indignant, the strangest evidences of courtly depravation. We renounce, for example, all attempt to translate in a bearable manner what he has to say of the *coussinets* and their employment in love; nor shall we endeavor to expose, even with as much reserve as possible, his scandalous theories on the drawers which women wore, and his strange revelations concerning the arcana of the gallant toilette. We have desired, however, to indicate, as one of the stigmata of the Prostitution of this century, the incredible attire which debauched women had in-

vented in honor of their lovers; but the reader will do well to seek, in the *Dames Galantes* of Brantôme, in the chapter *de la Veüe en Amour*, the details of that secret mode which the women of the court had not disdained to borrow from the professional courtezans. Brantôme had heard tell of a "beautiful and honest lady" who did not blush to make use of such means, and who boasted that she was thus more "pleasing" in the eyes of her husband. The tragic death of Madame de la Bourdaisière revealed an indecency of this sort and created a scandal which echoed throughout France. All the contemporary memoirs report the fact, which may be looked upon as a characteristic trait of the history of this corrupt epoch. Pierre de l'Estoile does not fail to record it in his *Registres-Journaux*. It is to be found also reported in the observations which the editor of the *Journal de Henri III* (edition of 1744), had printed after the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, while informing us that these observations "came from a person (feminine) who knew exactly the court of King Henri IV." Françoise Babou de la Bourdaisière, aunt of Gabrielle d'Estrées, lived in concubinage with the Baron Yves d'Alegre, who perished with her in 1592, massacred by the people at Issoire, of which he was Henri IV's Governor.

Brantôme makes us acquainted also with one of the most ingenious refinements of Prostitution at the court of the Valois. "A great Prince whom I know," he says, in the second discourse of his *Dames Galantes*, "caused his courtiers or ladies to sleep in bed-coverings of black taffeta well stretched. . . ." Brantôme might have added that this invention, attributed to the beautiful Imperia* and frequently put into practice by the great Italian courtezans, had been introduced into France by Queen Marguerite first wife of Henri IV. The author of the *Divorce Satyrique* relates, in this factum, written in the name of the King, that this immodest adulteress "containing her stubborn inclinations to voluptuousness and wishing to obtain in it more delights," received her lover, the Seigneur de Champvalon, "in a bed lighted with

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) See the *Contes Drolatiques*.

divers torches, between two sheets of black taffeta, accompanied by so many other little pleasures that I grow tired in telling of them." The beds of the sixteenth century were sometimes as large as from seven to eight feet, for in certain circumstances, etiquette, politeness, or friendship would demand that a gentleman offer a place in his bed to another, in order to do the latter honor or to bear a witness to him of a fraternal confidence. This was an old usage of Chivalry's; the sharing of the bed was equivalent to all the vows of the ancient fraternity in arms. An account cited by Mayer informs us that, on the night preceding the battle of Montcontour, "M. de Guise shared his bed with M. le Prince (of Conde) and they slept together." The author of the *Galerie Philosophique du Seizième Siècle* (Paris, 1783, in 8, 3 volumes) adds: "The custom of offering one's bed did not go out of fashion until the minority of Louis XIV. Louis XIII had shared his bed with the Constable of Luynes; the Constable slept in the middle, the King at his right, the Duchess at his left." This singular custom, which appears to have been preserved among the small bourgeoisie down to the time of the Revolution, and which proves merely the simplicity of manners, was not always so respectable. It is difficult, for example, not to entertain a doubt and a suspicion, when we learn, from a licentious tradition of the time of Louis XIV, that the charming widow of Scarron, who was later to become the severe and irreproachable Madame de Maintenon, frequently shared the bed of her friend, the beautiful Ninon de Lenclos. However, this may be, having become a favorite of the King, and almost Queen of France, she frequently remembered with a sigh, the light and intimate conversations of the "yellow chamber" of the quartier Saint-Paul.

At a period of general demoralization such as that which reigned in France under Henri III, everything was or might become, a pretext or an occasion for scandal. The most audacious Prostitution had found its way into public as into private life. The King, who himself set an example of vice, and who paraded his own shameful depravation, futilely published edicts against

luxurious habits; the sumptuary ordinances of his predecessors were "so ill-practiced and observed, that there has never been seen in the memory of man," the King says, in his edict of the 24th of March, 1583, "such a licentious excess in the said habits and other adornments as there is at present." But what motivated the ordinances that followed was less the indecency of attire than the immoderate employment of silken stuffs, gold and silver embroideries, jewels and all the products of the foreigner's art; the concern of the nobility, whom these ordinances were designed particularly to interest, was less to see a disappearance of immodest modes than it was to force the rich who did not belong to the nobility to submit to a tyrannical regulation in the price, material and form of their vestments. Henri III said, in issuing his great edict of 1583, that his subjects were "destroying" and impoverishing themselves "by the dissoluteness and superfluity which is in their habiliments, and, what is worse, and what gives us more displeasure, God is greatly offended thereby, and modesty has become almost wholly extinguished;" but he did not think of including in the articles of the ordinance a single repressive provision directed against immodesty of costume. He interdicts with a minute care "bands of embroidery, quiltings (*piqueures*) or tippings (*emboutissemens*), laces (*passemens*), fringes, tufts, *tortils* or *canetilles*, borders or bands, of any sort whatever, *chesnettes* and *arrière-poincts* on any species of vestment; he enumerates with the same severity the notable differences which the condition of the person may authorize in the richness of accoutrement; he forbids women à *chapron de drap* to wear more than one chain of gold at the throat or more than one row (*rangée*) of buttons, hooks, aglets or knots, on the body or vents of their robes; but he does not seek to remedy the "abominations and disguises" of the mode, as the genial Jean des Caurres described them at the time, in supplicating the magistrates and public governors to look after this scandalous relaxation of manners.

Already, in 1576, Henri III had endeavored to restore to vigor the sumptuary edicts of Charles IX; he had them read and published "to the sound of the trumpet and by public cry" through

the streets of Paris and in other cities of the realm. A fine of a thousand crowns in gold was to be imposed on any person, man or woman, who should be found in violation of the law, that is to say, clad in such vestments as his social condition did not permit him to wear. But while the King thought it necessary to renew the "holy" ordinances of his ancestors against the excesses of luxury, "with prohibitions to persons not noble to usurp the habits of gentlemen and to make of their women demoiselles," he paid no attention to the incredible indecency of the costume of women.* Parliament, which was then closing the Italian theater of the Gelosi, for the reason that "all those comedies teach nothing but lecheries and adulteries, and serve only as a school of debauchery to the youth of both sexes of the city of Paris," did not dare to arrest or reform the "*mode qui court*." "The disorder," wrote Pierre de l'Estoile, under date of the 26th of June, 1577, in announcing the expulsion of the Gelosi, "the disorder was great enough without such preceptors, principally among the ladies and demoiselles, who appeared to have learned the manners of the soldiers of that time, who made a parade of showing their cuirasses gilded and shining upon parade, for the ladies likewise made a parade of their bosoms and open breasts and other pectoral parts, which have a perpetual movement, which these ladies produce by compass or by measure, like a clock, or, to speak more properly, like the bellows of the blacksmiths when they light the fire in the forge." (See the *Journal de Henri III*, in the excellent edition of MM. Champollion.)

The sumptuary court ordinances, which were so numerous during the seventeenth century never attacked anything but luxury and never regulated anything but the value of habits and the quality of stuffs, according to the conditions of persons; they were not concerned with the indecent caprices of fashion, and they remained indifferent to the scandalous abuses of nudity. But religion on the one hand and morality on the other made up for the silence of the laws on the subject of costume. They aided one

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) An oversight which is at last being remedied by the Legislatures of our Southern and Western States.

and the other, the progress of public decency, and the good women, who were ashamed of being like courtezans in their attire, took it upon themselves better than kings and parliaments with their edicts could have caused them to do to submit fashion to the laws of modesty and decency. And yet, as Joly says, in his *Avis Chrétiens pour l'Institution des Enfants*, "one of the most difficult things with these girls is to deprive them of the desire for curious habits and ornaments of the body. The reason for this is that women naturally love to be adorned." The *débordement* had gone so far in the matter of habits and adornment that the very excess of the evil produced a happy and salutary reaction; until each came to desire that her manner of clothing herself should not be an unfortunate index of her manners, while no one, except those of evil life, sought any longer to be distinguished by the exterior characteristics of debauchery and impudicity. Seemliness gradually resumed its empire in the domain of fashion and the ladies and demoiselles, while reserving the right to go with bare throats and shoulders at gala affairs and balls, no longer showed themselves in the sixteenth century, clad in the impure livery of Prostitution.

CHAPTER XXXVI

WE POSSESS a very curious and very strange document regarding the state of Prostitution at the end of the 16th century. It is the work entitled *Le Cabinet du Roy de France, dans Lequel il y a Trois Perles Précieuses d'Inestimable Valeur, par le Moyen Desquelles Sa Majesté s'en Va le Premier Monarque du Monde et Ses Sujets du Tout Soulagez*. This rare work, of which there exists but a single edition, forms an octavo volume of 647 pages, with eight flyleaves and five unnumbered contents pages; it bears neither name of the place of publication nor of the publisher; it is dated 1581 from the title page, and the dedicatory epistle to Henri III, in which the author hides himself under the initials N. D. C., ends with the date of the first of November, 1581. The bibliographers have merely cited this book, without deigning to concern themselves with its contents, and we are unaware that the *Mélanges Tirés d'Une Grande Bibliothèque* (Vol. XVII, pages 362 and following), where we find a species of very succinct and very imperfect analysis of this singular publication, comes in reality from the secret headquarters of the reformers. It is sufficient to examine this volume and to compare its mode of printing with that of books printed about the same time at La Rochelle in order to be certain that it was manufactured in one of those typographical shops of that city which was then the capitol of *Huguenoterie*. As to the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, the learned La Monnoye, in his remarks on the *Auteurs Déguisés* of Baillet, would have it that he was Nicolas Barnaud, to whom he also attributed the *Miroir des François. contenant l'estat et le maniement des affaires de France*, published under the pseudonym of Nicolas de Montand; but there is nothing to authorize or justify this supposition, which La Monnoye does not take the pains to support with a few proofs or a few plausible reasons. The opinions set forth by the commentator of Baillet

has, nevertheless, been accepted as an accredited fact by bibliographers. An attempt has even been made to explain the initials of the unknown author as those of Nicolas de Crest, and by founding this bizarre conjecture on the fact that Nicolas Barnaud was born at Crest in Dauphiné!

But the name of the author makes little difference to us, and we shall not enter into extended details in an attempt to prove that Nicolas Barnaud, physician, theologian, Socinian, and, above all, an indefatigable seeker of the philosophers' stone, would never have been able to assemble the enormous statistical material which serves to make up the *Cabinet du Roy de France*. It is sufficient to point out, from a letter of this Barnaud, written at Layden, in 1599, that he had traveled in Spain for more than forty years before going to take up his residence in Holland (see the letter prefacing his work on alchemy, entitled: *Quadriga aurifera, nunc primum a Nicolao Bernaudo (sic), Delphinatæ, in lucem edita*. (Lugd. Batav., ap. Christ. Raphelengium, 1599, in-8). We are inclined rather to attribute the *Cabinet* to Nicolas Froumenteau, whose name figures on the title page of a work of the same sort, published the same year: *le Secret des finances de France, decouvert et departi en trois livres et maintenant publié pour ouvrir les moyens légitimes et nécessaires de purger les dettes du roy, decharger les sujets des subsides imposés depuis trente-un ans et recouvrer tous les deniers pris à Sa Majesté*. A first edition, a good deal less complete than this, which forms three octavo volumes, had appeared in 1581 with these titular variations: *Le Secret des trésors de la France, decouvert et departy en deux livres*. The printer, in a note which appears on the reverse of the frontispiece, states that this work had been awaited with so lively an impatience that the sheets were snatched from the press while still damp. This circumstance is sufficient to indicate that the printing was done in a Protestant city, where it did not have to be done in secret. The *Secret des Finances*, as a matter of fact, would appear to have been printed, like the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, at La Rochelle, and it is very probable that this latter anonymous work, published after the former which

is also dedicated to Henri III and dated from Paris the 1st of January, 1581, is from the hand of this same Nicolas Froumenteau, whose name is not to be found in any other book. It remains to determine whether *Froumenteau* is not a pseudonym, hiding one of those terrible champions of the time, either Agrippa d'Aubigné," Plessis-Mornay, Lancelot Voesin de la Popelinière, or, finally the furious minister of reform, Guillaume Reboul, who was the author of a number of books equally violent and not less eccentric. But we are not here concerned with the *Secret des Finances*, although it might furnish many curious details for a history of Prostitution, such, for example, as the "number of girls and women violated" during the civil wars. The *Cabinet du Roy de France* is sufficiently filled with information to make it unnecessary for us to seek elsewhere for material relative to the same subject in the same epoch.

First for a summary analysis of the book. The three precious pearls which the author proposes to examine are the Word of God, the Nobility and the Third Estate, which he shows us as being shut up in a sheath (*étui*) or casket (*écrin*) which is none other than the realm of France. He first makes an enumeration of the goods and revenue of the clergy; he would have the King take possession of these and make them a part of his domain, in order to be able, with the aid of these new resources, to support armies, succor the poor, bring prosperity to agriculture, and put an end to those disorders which were dishonoring the Catholic Church. He goes on to point out the vices and bad deportment of the nobility; and he indicates the reforms which might re-establish the Nobility in its ancient splendor. Finally, he speaks of the Third Estate with a very special predilection; according to the plan of finances which he has conceived, the Third Estate should become the steward of the property of the nobles and ecclesiastics, and then should take upon itself the task of paying the debts of the nation, filling the coffers of the King and furnishing dowries suitable to marrying off all the priests and nuns. After this simple exposition of the principal ideas of the author, who was

evidently an intractable Huguenot, one might with reason ask what relationship such a work could have with a history of Prostitution, but it is sufficient to open this *Cabinet du Roy de France* in order to form an idea of the interesting documents it contains of this subject, although we shall not take literally all the accusations which the author makes against the manners of the clergy and the nobility of his time. It would appear that this author had collected, under the title of *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*, an immense quantity of notes and statistical material with the object of establishing, by means of figures, the true state of demoralization in the Catholic Church; this treatise would have filled not less than three thousand scrolls, and it would have formed more than three folio volumes if it ever had been printed; but we may presume that it was never printed, although a number of bibliographers, notably Le Duchat, in his remarks on the *Confession de Sancy*, have cited it as a work which had seen the light of day. It is from this work that the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* has drawn what he has to say on the subjects of polygamy and Prostitution under the reign of Henri III.

Despite the exaggeration in his calculations, despite the brutality of the accompanying reflections, however monstrous his book may appear to be in some particulars, we are forced to recognize the fact that the Huguenot statistician is not here indulging merely in a work of the imagination, but that he had here collected certain precise data. He affects an air of good faith and conviction in drawing up his inventories and systems; he is filled with a holy horror for polygamy or Prostitution, desiring to see not merely all the nuns married, but also all the husbands and all the women faithful to their mates! It is this fine zeal for marriage which incessantly inspires him and which renders him the implaceable foe of all celibates, adulterers and polygamists. "I maintain," he says in his dedication to the King, "that more than four times seven hundred thousand women commit polygamy or concubinage with those magicians and enchanters who for so long have kept hidden those pearls in your Cabinet." The magicians

and the enchanters are the bad priests, the false nobles and the debauchees of every sort. The author does not otherwise indicate that he is a Huguenot and that, under pretext of restoring order to French finances, he would replace "the papal Church," by the Reformation of Calvin, which he refers to as "the true word of God." But the details which he pretends to have drawn from the best sources regarding the moral state of the clergy are none the less precious even when mingled with those which are slanderous and exaggerated. We know, from the statements of Catholic writers themselves, that the clergy at this period of general disorder, did not lead any more edifying a life than did the laity.

The author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, after having stated as a fact that the total revenue of the clergy amounts to two hundred million crowns, which, at the current rate of silver, would represent nearly two billion, endeavors to demonstrate that this enormous revenue is devoured by Prostitution; for, according to him, there are nearly five million persons "who, under the veil of the Gallican Church, live at the expense of the Crucifix." He believes that he can establish the exactness of his calculations by selecting as a criterion one of the archbishoprics of France, that of Lyons, and by enumerating all that goes to make up the personnel of sacred polygamy in this archbishopric. Without entering into all the details of these frightful statistics, and before presenting them in tabular form in the manner of those which Parent-Duchâtelet has laboriously drawn up in his work, *De la Prostitution*, we believe that a few features will be sufficient to give us an idea of the statistical method employed by the author.

"There will be found," he says, (page 19), "in the dioceses of the said archbishopric (of Lyons) more than 45 women married to honorable men of all conditions, who have been abused by and who episcopally commit lechery with the said prelates. Notwithstanding such adulteries, the said prelates have held and hold fine lassies and girls, who have given them fine children, all of whom engender and every day produce other children; but here we seek only those bastards who have issued from that episcopal primacy

during the year of this State, who are in number twenty-seven. There will also be found in the list forty-two debauched girls." The author announces that the "episcopal waifs" (*épaves épiscopales*) are not mentioned in this list. He means by that "those girls who are accustomed to refresh messieurs the prelates when they make their journey, that is to say, in the visitation of their dioceses." As to the servants and domestics of the prelates, they follow in the footsteps of their masters: "In the list which we have here drawn up," remarks the author with mathematical calm, "are specified 65 women married to notable bourgeois who have committed lechery with the aforesaid. By means of such lecheries, sodomies and adulteries, the bellies of 160 girls have been filled, eighty of whom have each had a bastard during the year of the present State." Now these domestics numbered fifty! Follow the secretaries and the chaplains, including 242 persons, among whom the author includes the stewards, the musicians, the butlers, the huntsmen, etc., but not the pages and lackeys: "of this said number, the list includes 53 sodomites, without including the pages and lackeys, who are, as it were, constrained to acquiesce in the desires of these monsters. 300 married women, and all named in the list, are found to have committed lechery with these domestics, who, beside these women, kept 500 lassies, 300 of whom have each produced a bastard during the year of the present State. According as it is written in the *Traité de la Polygamie* there have been but 48 maquernelles discovered; the others are so secret that one cannot even recognize them, much less have their names and nicknames." This passage shows us that the census of the agents of polygamy have been made by means of names and nicknames of persons.

The suffragans, official vicars and others, formed a personnel of 245 persons: the list in the *Polygamie Sacrée* gives them 58 bourgeois women married and of honorable families, 19 sodomites, 14 bardashes, 39 old ex-chambermaids, 17 maquernelles, 20 chambermaids and others, "121 of whom have each had bastards during the year of this present State." The canons, to the

number of 478, were not, if we are to believe this statistician, any more reserved in their conduct. He excuses himself for not having been able to discover more than 600 married women "lecherer cononically;" but he indicated in the terrible list a canon "who, in one year, has debauched and had affairs with nine bourgeois women, namely, two wives of advocates, one wife of a procurator, three drapers' wives, the wife of a money changer, a procuress and a female haberdasher." He lists, in the chapter on canons, 68 sodomites, 38 bardashes, 846 lassies and chambermaids, "kept by bed and board" (*tenues à pot et à feu*) of whom "the majority had lost the fruit which they bore," and 62 *maquerelles*, designated by their names and nicknames. "In addition to the aforesaid canons," adds the inflexible calculator, "you have 96, the third part of whom are all syphilitic and gouty, the others are sexagenarians who have chambermaids, all of whose teeth are falling out of their mouths, as much on account of the syphilis as of old age, and who no longer make any children." The canons, having in their service 900 valets, these valets who are "fresh, fat and full" (*frais, gras et replets*), keep 1400 girls and commit lechery with 150 married women. The chaplains, to the number of 300, "multiply greatly in bastards," and the list attributes to each of them two or three lecheresses (*paillardes*) married or unmarried; the societarians (*sociétaires*) are still more debauched; one of them is cited "who has lechered in one year with 28 women." Their valets excelled them in continence, for, while they numbered 215, their polygamous record includes 168 girls, who have produced 118 bastards in the year of the census. The clerks or *coriaux* (there were then 317 in the archbishopric of Lyons), all young and gay, cared less for girls than for married women; 200 of these latter are registered as having shared the debauches of these *garçonnetts* but it may be presumed that not all of them were known.

Suppose we stop in this prodigious nomenclature and leave at one side all that the implacable enemy of Prostitution advances concerning the deportment of the nuns and monks. It is suffi-

cient, by actual citations from the test, to have indicated the sort of statistics which were so audaciously compiled in the *Polygamie Sacrée*. We now purpose to present in the form of a synoptic table, which the author himself has taken the care to draw up, a numerical and complete account of the unheard of disorders which existed in 1581 in the archbishopric of Lyons, an archbishopric chosen among all others as a scandalous specimen of the depravation of the clergy.

Detailed State of Sacred Polygamy in the Archbishopric or Primacy of Lyons in the Year 1581, according to the Researches and Calculations of the Author of the CABINET DU ROY DE

FRANCE.

1. Number of archbishops, bishops, abbots and priors	480
2. Their gentlemen and servants	1,782
3. Abbatial officers	957
4. Their valets and servants	1,250
5. Canons	478
6. Their valets and servants	900
7. Curates or pastors	13,200
8. Their valets	6,700
9. Vicars of the said curates	13,200
10. Their valets	4,200
11. Societarians	849
12. Their valets	225
13. Companions of the order and officers of the cloister	800
14. Their valets	420
15. Monks	4,200
16. Their valets and lay assistants	800
17. Carthusians	150
18. Their valets	169
19. Gray Friars*	700
20. Jacobins	600
21. Their valets	166

*Or Franciscans.

CHRISTIAN ERA

339

22. Carmelites	452
23. Their valets	180
24. Their lay assistants and valets.....	160
25. Jansenists or Anthonians.....	315
26. Minims, Celestines, etc.....	500
27. Jesuits and their servants.....	62
28. Knights and commanders (of the Order of Malta)	692
29. Their servants	1,800
30. Nuns and religious.....	2,345
31. Their valets and guardian fathers.....	600
32. Novices and <i>enfants de coeur</i> , Episcopal as well as abbatial	2,800
33. Clerks or <i>coriaux estalons</i>	317

ADULTEROUS WOMEN

Episcopal	468
Canonical	750
Of the chaplains	160
Of the societarians	600
Of the curates, etc.	17,000
Of the vicars, etc.	24,700
Of the monks	12,100
Of the members of the Order of Malta	12,120
Of the Franciscans	400
Of the Jacobins	200
Of the Carmelites	200
Of the Augustinians	130
Of the Carthusians	40
Of the Jesuits	5

LASSIES* (OR UNMARRIED GIRLS)

Episcopal	900
Canonical	2,200
Of the chaplains	800
Of the Societarians	600

*Garces.

Of the pastors or curates	20,000
Of their vicars.....	30,000
Monkish or abbatial.....	22,000
Bastards of bastards.....	5,000
Hierosolomytes, that is to say, members of the Order of Malta	2,009
Franciscan or gray nuns.....	400
Jacobins	1,278
Carmelites	410
Augustinians	378
Carthusians	166
Anthonians	800
Celestines, Minims, etc.....	600
Jesuits	7
Of the Guardian fathers.....	600
Of the Clerks or coriaux.....	187

MAQUERELLES OR MAQUEREAUX

Episcopal	484
Canonical	62
Of the chaplains.....	45
Of the Societarians.....	411
Of the curates.....	2,000
Of their vicars.....	3,000
Monkish and abbatial.....	2,400
Order of Malta	200
Franciscan	75
Jacobin	180
Carmelite	130
Augustinian	96
Carthusian	40
Jesuits	3
Celestine, etc.	24
Of the guardian fathers.....	38
Of the clerks or coriaux.....	59
Of the nuns.....	300

SODOMITES

Episcopal	124
Canonical	68
Chaplains	40
Societarian priests	112
Curates	200
Vicars	none
Abbots and priors, etc.....	411
Monks	1,100
Franciscans	160
Jacobins	108
Augustinians	60
Carthusians	50
Minims and Celestines.....	9
Jesuits	49

NOTE. We believe it would be useless to introduce into this table the census of *Bastards, Bastards of Bastards, Horses, Venery* and *Falconry*.

The author of these strange calculations, borrowed from the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée* (Book V, Chapters 9 and 10), does not reveal to us the manner in which he made his mysterious census, which he assures us is valid,* not only for the whole Gallican Church, but also for the whole of Christendom; there is one objection however which he will have to meet at once in the minds of his readers: "Who is there," they will say to him, "who could have discovered and counted, in such or such a primacy or archbishopric, such and such a number of ecclesiastics, whores, maquerelles and such and such a number of other persons described in the summary and census above given?" The response if it is specious is not very conclusive. The author says that it was no more difficult to make a census of sacred Polygamy than it would be to make a catalogue of the stars or an "inventory of the diabolic monarchy," which includes 72 princes and 7,405,926 devils, without counting the little ones. We will admit that these

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) The table bears internal evidence of falsity. Witness the excessive number of items of so-called "round figures."

latter statistics are a bit more difficult than the other, "in view of the fact," as our author tells us, "that we associate, drink, and eat ordinarily with the accomplices of sacred polygamy." After having defended in this manner the authenticity of his invention and of his inventory, the comptroller-general of sacred polygamy indulges in a summary (*recueil*) by dioceses of the "prelates and benefice-holders, their domestics and other persons, male or female, who live at the expense of the Crucifix." This summary, to which we are far from according entire credence, deserves nevertheless to be preserved in view of the lack of more serious statements and information less vitiated by Calvinistic partiality. We have, accordingly, drawn up a table in the manner of Parent-Duchâtelet, in order to establish the balance of Prostitution, in each diocese, along with the income and outlay of the polygamists of the Gallican Church. (*See the accompanying Table.*)

General State of Sacred Polygamy, by Dioceses, in 1581, with the Income and Outlay, from the Researches and Calculations of the Author of the CABINET DU ROY DE FRANCE.

Primacies	Ecclesiastics, including all their officers and servants	Sacerdotal adulteresses	Girls of Evil Life	Bastards and Bastards of Bastards	Maque-reaux and Maque-relles	Sodom-ites	Receipts	Expenditures
Lyons	65,230	67,888	88,078	59,138	8,839	2,083	4,657,784	3,820,873
Rheims	66,740	88,500	63,700	9,700	9,700	2,600	4,988,788	3,807,684
Sens	66,712	68,852	96,200	60,500	11,000	1,800	4,987,998	4,100,020
Rouen	62,600	73,714	70,026	70,000	15,700	2,200	5,348,648	4,237,537
Beauvais	58,300	58,500	76,400	64,000	12,200	1,500	4,686,474	3,973,232
Tours	67,300	68,500	77,900	69,700	12,300	1,900	4,980,642	4,260,111
Bourges	62,400	75,200	111,500	67,300	14,700	2,000	5,776,144	4,993,321
Bordeaux	53,700	80,200	100,400	71,000	15,600	1,200	4,988,676	4,127,123
Thoulouse*	58,600	79,800	103,009	70,000	18,400	1,600	5,468,877	4,647,530
Narbonne	58,900	71,200	94,600	63,500	15,600	1,600	4,887,622	4,112,610
Aix or Arles	56,300	67,200	95,400	58,900	14,800	1,500	4,752,600	4,111,200
Vienne	55,000	62,200	58,900	57,400	12,000	1,600	3,875,666	3,214,443
Other dioceses not distinguished, to the number of 69, including those in the low country of Flanders ..	287,000	300,000	370,000	400,000	100,000	18,000	41,500,000	35,600,000

TOTAL

Total number of persons living at the expense of the Crucifix in the Gallican Church	5,155,102
Sum total of receipts	100,530,119 crowns
Sum total of expenses	84,596,089 crowns

*Toulouse.

The author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* always sends his readers back to the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*, from which he draws the material for his monstrous calculations; but he does not say that this treatise had been printed; we are unable, therefore, to appreciate the circumstances which prevented it from appearing, or which caused copies of it to be destroyed. What proves to us the existence of this treatise, is the fact that the author who cites it constantly, indicating the books and chapters from which he makes his borrowings, has no precise information concerning the polygamy of gentlemen and is able, on this point, merely to present a set of statistics analogous to those which he had found already in the general census of sacred polygamy. He devotes himself by preference, with a sort of malign pleasure, to the first part of his subject, and he comes back to it tirelessly throughout his work, which appears to have had no other end except to cause the royal confiscation of the goods of the clergy by compelling the ecclesiastica and all the religious, male as well as female (*tant masles que femelles*) to marry whether they cared to or not. The manner in which he sets about to establish the authenticity of his figures relative to the agents of Prostitution does not, it is true, impress us as being serious or authentic, and we recognize the fact that, in this process of insinuation and induction, the bad faith of the "crazy" (*enrages*) Huguenots, as they were then called, is to be descried; nevertheless, these very calumnies, replete as they are with a venomous hatred, are not wholly to be disdained, for they give us a definite picture of the debauched life led by certain unworthy members of the Catholic clergy at this period.*

Following, for example, is the manner in which the author justifies himself for having ascribed to each French cardinal a seraglio of six mistresses, without counting the married women in his Eminence's train: "But how to establish," he adds, "this figure, six? By the cardinals themselves; they are not so shameful, surely, not to confess this. The most ancient of their col-

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf., the "statistics" of the Anti-Saloon League in America.

leagues, has for more than a year, abused more than thirty. There is one cardinal who does nothing but stand, in a manner of speaking, and who is one of the youngest, and who does no other thing but serve as a spare stallion (*estalon à rechange*). The first three months he wore the red hat, which were the days of his greatest continence, he also cardinalized two married women and three young damoiselles. How to prove that? By himself." Brantôme, in fact, who prides himself on being a very good Catholic, does not speak in any other terms of the "great" Cardinal of Lorraine, who "trained with his own hand" (*dressait de sa main*) the feminine newcomers at the court. The historian of the *Dames Galantes* can conceive nothing better to excuse his Eminence's incontinence than to say "that he was a man of flesh and blood, like any other" and that "the king willed it thus and took pleasure in it." The author of the *Cabinet du Roy* is then, in agreement with Brantôme, when he arrives at this Rabelaisian conclusion, which recalls the style of the *Confession de Sancy*: "As many cardinals as there are at court, so many stallions are there for the ladies; as many horns as there are in their bonnets, so many cuckolds (*cornards*) do they make every week. What would you have them do? They do not know how to preach; the majority of them do not know what a sermon is. Dispute in theology? The ladies are none too well nourished in that, nor the cardinals either. If when they are together they must speak of something, it is not of affairs of State, nor, still less, of finances. . . . Of what do they speak then? Of laughing and dancing. Why do they do that? To lecher. How would you prove that? By the fact that oftenest the belly of mademoiselle swells up and the belly of the cardinal's purse goes down; the merchants themselves, who sell them their cloth of gold, their silver and their silk know well enough to whom such goods go and who it is caused them to be purchased."

There is no room for astonishment, after this shameful por-

trait of the cardinals' manners,* that the analyst of sacred polygamy makes no scruple in painting in the same colors the domestic servants of the cardinals. "The prelates and the cardinals," he says, availing himself of the proverb, "Like master, like servant" (*tels maistres, tels valets*), "are lascivious as their valets are; the prelates are lecherers; the valets are the same; they are not cardinals but they act like cardinals. In the deepest and darkest bordeau of France you will not hear such villainous and filthy remarks as are to be heard in the house of a cardinal. I call to witness upon this point all those who frequent the cardinals. There, by day or night, you will hear nothing else than talk of 'fresh meat';† that is the name they give to the poor girls and women whom they debauch, and after they have done so, they mock them with open mouth, if their mouth does not happen to be syphilitic or chancrous." In the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*, mention is made "of the lecherous manner in which domestics of the cardinals take the place of courtezans (certain demoiselles who follow the court), even down to the muleteers, who, after having taken their pastime, see that the cardinals get what is left." It was particularly on the journeys of the cardinals or prelates, when they were visiting their archbishoprics or priorities, that these domestics gave free reign to their unbridled libertinism; for they lodged, like their masters, in the houses of notable inhabitants in each of the cities in which they stopped to pass the night or for a sojourn, "and rarely do they leave their lodgings," relates the implacable reformer, "without having struck a blow at the honor of their

*The gallant propensities of the wearers of the red hat have been proverbial in irreverent literature, at least from the sixteenth century down. I recall a modern rhyme of the barroom variety which runs as follows:

Oh, the popes have many nephews,
And the cardinals, as well,
And enough of pretty nieces
To pave a mile or so of hell,
But what amazes my profundity,
In spite of all research,
Is the avuncular fecundity
Of the princes of the church.

†An expression, as previously noted, still in use today.

host or hostess, and if they cannot arrive at their ends, they will arouse a greater than themselves in order to accomplish what they propose. If the daughter of the house is rich, she is married to some maquereau, or to monsieur the secretary. If she is already married, she has already lost, for she saw so great a corruption all about her that it was impossible for her not to fall into polygamy."

It may be believed, in short, that the numerous domestics which a prelate kept in his suite, were not models of continence and morality, especially when we reflect on the sad results of bad example and bad counsel in a group of debauched and lazy men. The household of a cardinal was made up of more than a hundred persons; that of a bishop did not include less than from fifty to sixty, living out of the episcopal "saucepan" (*marmite*). Thus, every bishop who kept the suite to which his rank entitled him, had in his service, one or two chaplains, a maître d'hôtel, a squire, a physician, three prothonotaries, three or four gentlemen, four or five pages, one or two secretaries, one or two valets de chambre, a steward, a cook, a butler, two or three choristers, two or three musicians, a tailor, an apothecary, a vivandier, eight servants, "as many prothonotaries as *maistres d'hostel*, squires and gentlemen," a falconer, a huntsman, three or four lackeys, an "arquebusier to accompany him in the chase and who had the conduct of a setter (*chaien chouchant*)," a hostler with two stableboys, a multeteer with a servant, and a wagoner. This curious enumeration, verified by the author "by more than fifty-six bishops," does not include the coachman nor the *garçons* or secretary's lackies, the steward, the butler and others.* All these men, the majority of them young, and ordinarily vowed to celibacy, possessed the most depraved manners, whatever may have been the sanctity of the prelate to whose house they were attached. It is easy to understand how they might, in many circumstances, cause to be reflected upon their respectable patron the shame of their own disorderly conduct, and, in this chapter

*Sic Lacroix.

at least, the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* had, perhaps, not too greatly inflated the figures of that Prostitution which centered about the houses of prelates; "Monsieur the Bishop is a man," he remarks in Huguenot fashion, "and monsieur his valet is not a horse. They do not want them to marry, and so they must find their pleasures in the commonalty."

One scandalous adventure, related with much verve by the author, who presents it as a picture of the interior of the episcopal, and who asserts that he knew personally the heroine, will give us an idea of what the manners of a prince of the Church were sometimes like in this age of dissoluteness and general license. "For an after supper recreation," says the narrator (page 79), "there was found a woman of honor, who, for pleasure, accompanied by twenty-three women, nine girls and eight servants, went to present *un mommon* (that is to say, they masked themselves for a dice party) to Monsieur the Bishop, in his lodgings, who undoubtedly was awaiting them, without this honorable woman knowing any other thing for, otherwise, I think so well of her that I know she would not have gone. The Bishop lost three crowns. To recompense himself for his loss, he caused the violins to be sounded, and they danced in such a manner that there was not a woman, nor any girl nor servant maid, who did not take part. This was done by the Bishop, two prothonotaries, the secretary, and seven or eight canons who had been attracted to the party. As to the valets, each of them fared for himself. In brief, from eight o'clock to midnight the ball continued, and there were many marvels from the comfitures to the collation. This honorable woman was taken by surprise, without thinking, for a villainous maquerelle, having caused her to enter Monsieur's study, pretending that other women were there, she found there a prothonotary who seized her and did with her, as is to be presumed, that which seemed good to him, because the good woman, leaving the place, hurled a thousand insults at that maquerelle, swearing that she would cause her to repent, and at the same instant, with tears in her eyes, she left that venerable company,

which was, indeed, very well bishoped (*maquignonnée*). The Bishop, to satisfy his pleasures, summoned even his palfreys; and bantering with them, they confessed freely what they had done in that *danse macabre*, and provoked Monsieur the Bishop to laughter." One might fancy he was reading a chapter of the *Moyen de Parvenir* of Beroalde de Verville; the author adds that the husband of this woman, who complained of having been the victim of a cowardly ambushade, had sworn vengeance on the Bishop and turned Huguenot. It is possible, nevertheless, that the Bishop was in no wise an accomplice in an act of violence committed by one of his servants, and that there was no other reproach which might have been made against him except that he loved the dance and good stories a little too well; but he was nevertheless responsible for the disorderly conduct of the inmates of his house.

The *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée* reflects the same disorders on the part of the servants of the canons, officials, deans, choristers and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, those of the abbots and the priors, and those of the monks of all the religious or military orders. These valets "are so well treated," says the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, "that from their faces, at the first glance, one may judge that they are the servants of canons and of monks, so fat are they and so well fed (*en bon point*), and so little trouble do they have in conquering the lassies, for those of their masters most often have others in their train, and when they do not have such, the lads know well where to find them. The trade of these lassies is so well practiced in and about their cloisters, that, passing by there, you smell the venison *a pleine gorge*, that is to say, they practice their trade of lechery very well." It is certain that this multitude of male domestics, well fed and often idle, only too greatly favored the progress of open and secret Prostitution, especially after legal Prostitution had been suppressed by the ordinance of Charles IX. "There is not a daughter of poor artisans, hodmen, *gajndeniers* or others with whom these villians do not batter the breech, and most often, for a loaf of white bread, they deflower a poor girl;

if she is beautiful, she goes to monsieur the canon; if she is middling beautiful and the master does not want her, the valet knows well enough what substitute to put in her place. . . . And as a fact, there is not a father nor a mother, upon casting a look upon such vermin, who should not tremble for the peril and extreme danger of their poor daughters and servant maids, for as many valets of this sort as you see, there are as many evil bulls among the heifers and cows in the midst of a prairie." The valets of the abbots possessed certain privileges which caused them to be envied by the canons' valets: "There are even some of this canaille," says the abbreviator of the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*, who, after having abused women who before were honorable, under the credit, favor and authority of their abbot master, have espoused their daughters against the will and consent of their fathers." As to the valets of the monks, who, according to the statistics, existed to the number of a thousand, and who kept up at that time "a terrible charivari in the matter of lechery," they are represented as infamous ones who "enter the most honorable houses, there to debauch the girls and servant maids, and for our sole recompense, we are constrained to rear their bastards." The Protestant writer completes his hideous portrait with one last brush stroke: "As to those who are so chaste," he says, "as to have but one or two lecheresses, be assured that in their *cahuetes* and small-clothes you will be able to smell all the fumes of sodomy." Finally, he states that, in the villages neighboring the abbey of Cluney, there had been counted from 700 to 800 debauched women, exclusively serving the monks and their valets: "We have but to read in the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*," he cries, after having indicated this *compte fait*, "and we shall see certain subtle monastics and *debendodes* of monks the most voluptuous which it is possible to conceive."

To so many turpitudes, to so many open or hidden excesses, the zeal of the Huguenots opposed one single remedy, which was looked upon as infallible, namely, marriage. The Huguenots would have all the ecclesiastica and their celibate servants re-

spond to the following questions: "1. If they are chaste. 2. If they have ever had knowledge of women or girls; and how many of them they have kept and are keeping." In case the responses were negative on the latter point, there were other more pressing questions: "1. If they had ever had copulation with demons. 2. If they have ever disported themselves at sodomy. 3. If they know that continence is a singular gift of God, which he does not give to all, but only to certain persons and sometimes for a time only, and those to whom it has not been given, ought to resort to marriage, for it is the remedy ordained by the Lord." As a consequence, the marriage of clerics should be required and ordained by the religious law, and all the more since the five articles proposed and adopted at the conference of Poissy, as the necessary safeguard of public morality, had never been put into execution on the part of the clergy. Those five articles included all the moral guaranties which could be invented against lust and its disastrous effects. In the first place, those ecclesiastics who did not possess the divine gift of continence were required to fast on bread and water for nine days "every time they felt themselves piqued or pricked by desires of the flesh;" secondly, they might not "speak nor communicate to women or to girls," except in the presence of the husbands or parents of the girls, "under pain of being degraded and revoked; thirdly, they might not drink wine except twice a week," and that "in order to possess a better means of containing themselves;" fourthly, they were required at marriage feasts to "content themselves with dancing a simple *bransle*, with the most beautiful, holy and gracious gestures of which they were master;" fifthly, auricular confession was only to take place in a chapel with five or six penitents at once, "in order that the confessor might do nothing that was not to the point."

The author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, in thus unmasking and tracking down the scandals of sacred polygamy, imagines that he has proved that the first precious pearl to be retrieved from this mire is "the word of God or true religion, by the means

of which the King may once more purge the realm of that villainous and detestable polygamy." The second pearl, the Nobility, would appear to be less "sunk in the mire" (*embourbée*) than the other; however, the rigid reformer, after having proposed the principle that "the true nobility is an utter enemy of that detestable polygamy," goes on to incriminate those gentlemen "who make so great a case of nobility of blood while they make so little of the nobility of virtue, to such a point that it seems to some that no vices can dishonor or pollute that nobility which they hold of their fathers and ancestors."* He regards, then, the false nobles as the most dangerous supports of polygamy, and the enumeration which he makes of these false nobles shows us the character and the "calibre" of each; there are "*gentilshommes de la mort-dieu* and other similar blasphemers," "gentlemen made in haste (*gentilshommes faits à la hâte*)," "gentlemen fillers of silk (*enfilleurs de soye*)," "gentlemen of the holy saucepan-faith (*de la foy sainte marmite*)," "gentlemanly white wolves, he-wolves, teases, scoundrels (*gentilshommes loups blanche, loups garoux, taquins, maraux*), etc." Prostitution undoubtedly did not play a mediocre role in all this gentlemanliness; but the author lacks materials and exact figures; he is obliged to confine himself to vague generalities, and he is thus content, in his inquiry into the French nobility, with mentioning the distinctive characteristics, good or bad, which belonged to those of this or that province. Those of Touraine are always swearers and blasphemers, atheists or "Epicureans;" those of Guyenne are pillagers and counterfeiters; those of Gascony are cruel and sanguinary, etc. "The vice which reigns most in Berry among the gentlemen, is lechery. While the nobles of other provinces are not exempt from this vice, they are not so imbued with it as those of Berry, though for this it would be hard to state the reason, since they conform entirely to the manners of those who practice polygamy; but they abound in

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) Cf. Tennyson's famous dictum of Victorian prudery:

"Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

other filthy and villainous vices, of which this is not of the smallest, and I am constrained to pause here with saying that, what they do to the wives of their relatives or neighbors the same is done to their own." This corrector of the nobility returns, then, to his favorite subject, in accusing the clergy of Berry of all the disorders which the gentlemen of the country permit themselves in the way of sacred polygamy. He denounces the immoral relations of noble ladies with the ecclesiastics; he flays the insouciance of husbands with regard to the conduct of their wives: "It is a very manifest dissoluteness," he cries, with the holy indignation of a preaching friar, "to leave the bed of one's husband and go at midnight to seek out monsieur the abbot, a prior or another, clad in such colors, and all the night with other women and without the knowledge of their husbands to sport and dance in such company with the immodest lessons which are there given, so strange and so monstrous; that the inveterate whores of the bordeaux blush with shame at the like; it is a dissoluteness, if not *maquerellage*, to give to drink to such good-for-nothings and their lecheresses, and then to take the cup and drink with them. If the trade keeps up, as it does in Berry, you will see a whole province confirmed in all wickedness and all ordure."

One might hope, after this exordium, that our anonymous author, who has been so prodigal with figures on the subject of sacred polygamy, would end by giving us a set of statistics of the same sort apropos of the nobility of Berry, whom he would appear to have known better than those of other provinces. But he does not here fulfill our expectations by giving us calculations as to the number of wives and daughters of gentlemen who were given to debauchery. He prefers to edify us, on this delicate point, by relating an adventure which might prove something if it happened frequently enough. Nine depraved gentlemen and three other young fellows of good family were at a fair near Blanc, and after having danced a few *branles*, they took their own relatives to an abbot "of mark," who had invited them to take supper at his house. The abbot, who was expecting them,

had "prepared" fourteen or fifteen women, "of whom he had made use on previous occasions." The company was a joyous and good-humored one; they sat down at table and there dined on all sorts of *épices* and comfitures. Then a page strummed a lute and for two consecutive hours the company danced; after the dance they promenaded in the garden and the vineyard: "each holding his nymph by the arm, they went into the wood, so that it was two o'clock in the morning before they began to leave." The abbot and three of his prothonotaries were members of the party, and all of them were "as content as it was possible." The time was thus spent till supper; the company supped copiously, and the promenades recommenced, no longer in the woods, but "on the beds and couches." The next day the rumor ran about that one of the most honorable ladies of Berry had been unable to save her virtue from the claws of a harpie, and after having for a long time merited the title of good woman, she "passed for a woman of the country." It was one of her cousins-german who had caused her to fall into the trap where she had lost her honor, and when this shameful *maquignon* of the abbot's pleasures was reproached with having prostituted his own relative and threatened with being pointed out to the husband, who might demand an account of this treason, he replied, laughingly: "My cousin is too wise not to know that if the pigs had not done that, neither she nor I would eat any more lard." The historian of polygamy adds, as though to confirm his tale, that the gentlemen of Berry are "so villainous that they lend their wives to one another!"

The author recurs on a number of occasions to these culpable disorders which he imputes to the ecclesiastics; but he makes no effort to give us a more precise idea of the ravages of Prostitution among the Nobility and the Third Estate. He lacks evidently, circumstantial notes on this head. His intentions are excellent, despite the excessive spleen of his attacks on sacred polygamy: "It is necessary," he says, "that the good in this realm should be stronger and more powerful than evil; it is necessary

that modesty preside over incivility, nobility over villainy and chastity over all impurity." He adjures the good citizens to join him in his efforts to correct manners and morally restore the French monarchy. He then enters upon certain financial calculations and reviews with a prodigious wealth of detail, the different sources of revenue of the Gallican Church; he concludes that this revenue, which amounts to 110 millions, is sufficient not only to keep the clergy, which will not spend more than 70 millions, once it shall have been subjected to a matrimonial regime, but sufficient also to supply the needs of the King. The whole secret of this great reform consists in the marriage of the polygamists and in the joining of the temporal domains of the ecclesiastics to the estate of the crown. One is tempted to take under consideration a plan of political economy based upon figures and combinations which appear to be too minute not to be real; for the author of this singular project presents, as a specimen of his labors, a complete statement of all the revenues of the archbishopric of Lyons, and he boasts of having left nothing out of this statistical picture, not a capon, not a pint of oats, not a wagon load (*charre*) of straw. This marvelous aptitude for calculation, which was a thing at once rare and new, gives us a certain confidence in the special census which had been made by the author or authors of the *Polygamie Sacrée*. We do not believe, however, that the remedy proposed by this terrible adversary of celibacy would have secured the beneficent and prompt effects expected of it the way of an amelioration of manners. The marriage of all the ecclesiastics who were financial tributaries of the King would undoubtedly have diminished the number of those mercenaries about them who lived by means of Prostitution; but Prostitution itself, which the ordinances of royalty had not succeeded in wiping out, by depriving it of its legal and regular form, would have continued to reproduce itself like must in the shadow of the convents and colleges. And yet, the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* was so thoroughly convinced of the sovereign efficacy of his connubial panacea that

he besought the worthy and virtuous Cardinal of Bourbon, aged fifty-eight years at that time, to set a salutary example to the clergy and the nobility by being the first to marry, making solemn confession of his infractions of the law of "virginity and continence required of celibates." Marriage of this sort, according to the anticipations of this retriever of Pearls would inevitably, in a short time, lead to three or four hundred thousand marriages, "pure and legitimate." "You will prevent, by this means," remarks the malicious Huguenot to the poor Cardinal, whom he suspects of having broken his vow of chastity more than seven times, "you will prevent each year thirty or forty thousand incests in the Gallican Church; fie, also on sodomy! more, twenty-five or thirty thousand persons who are accustomed to indulge in this vice will be free of it by means of marriage; and we shall eventually obtain the total suppression of all the whores, cardinal, episcopal, abbatial, canonical, monastic, presbyterial and all the others of whatsoever quality or order . . . , as well as the likely suppression of all ruffians, lecherers, maquereaux, maquerelles, and bastards, the upkeep of whom is more than sufficient to pay all the debts, extraordinary as well as ordinary, of the crown of France. Behold, then, the profit which marriage would bring; but behold also an even greater good which would follow and that is that all those veiled and recluse ladies in the monasteries and convents would marry and give a good kick to their incubi and to all copulation and demonomania which the Enemy of nature practices on this poor sex!" The Cardinal did not marry, despite the good advice which had been given him, and polygamy went its way.

We certainly have no desire to give to this bizarre and curious work more credence than it deserves; we agree with the Marquis of Paulmy (*Mélanges Tirés d'une Grande Bibliothèque*) that the author displays in it "a gross and revolting prejudice against the clergy;" but we are forced to recognize the fact that the clergy of the 16th century was far from being commendable for those virtues which are always to be its property. Dulaure, in his *His-*

toire de Paris (pages 516 and following of Volume IV. of the 12 mo. edition), has collected certain incontestible evidence relating to the corruption and perversity of the ecclesiastical body, and this evidence agrees almost literally with the assertions of the *Polygamie Sacrée*. Jean de Montluc, Bishop of Valance, remarked on the 23d. of August, 1560, in the course of a speech delivered in the King's Council: "The cardinals and the bishops have not hesitated to give their benefices to their *maistres d'hostel* and, what is more, to their *valets de chambre*, cooks, barbers and lackeys. The same priests, by their avarice, ignorance and dissolute life, have rendered themselves odious and contemptible to all the world." (*Mem. de Conde*, Volume I, page 560.) In an assemblage of notables held in the town hall of Paris, in the month of December, 1575, three hundred remonstrances to the King were drawn up, among which the following passage is to be remarked: "The bishops and curates do not reside within their benefices and bishoprics, but leave and abandon their poor flock to the mouth of the wolf, without any pasturage or instruction. . . . and the ecclesiastics are so extremely excessive in lust, avarice and other vices that the scandal has become public." The same year, a Catholic writer, C. Marchand, also drew up some *Remonstrances au Peuple Francois, sur les Diversitez des Vices qui Regnet en ce Temps* (Remonstrances to the French people on the Diversity of Vices which Reign at this Time): "Are there any today any more gone in vice," cried the author with bitterness, "than the prelates of the Church?" He goes on to reproach the curates and the monks with frequenting "the wine-shops, the gaming-houses and the brothels;" he complains of the shameful excesses which were defiling the house of the Lord. Similar complaints are to be found in a multitude of historical documents, which do not come from the Protestants' and which have never found contradictors. Brantôme, for example, has given us, in the *Vie de Francois I*, a sorry picture of the interior contents of abbeys before the Concordat; he pictures the monks as choosing for abbot "him who was the best companion, who best loved the lasses,

dogs and birds, who was the best drinker; in brief, him who was the most debauched, in order that, having made him their abbot or prior, he might afterward permit them all such debauches, dissoluteness and pleasures." The following proverb, which scandalized no one, was prevalent among the people: "Avaricious or lecherous as a presbyter or a monk." Finally, Brantôme dares to speak of the bishops and the abbots in these terms: "God knows what life they lead! Certainly, they are more assiduous in their dioceses than they have ever been before, for they never budge out of them. But why not? It is because they lead there a life which is wholly dissolute, with dogs, birds, feasts, banquets, confraternities, wedding feasts and whores, of whom they make their seraglios, even as I have heard tell of one in the old days who made a search for pretty little girls of the age of ten years, of promising beauty, and then boarded them out here and there among the parishes and villages as gentlemen do their hounds, in order to make use of them when they were full grown."

These depravations, these vices, these abuses were certainly but afflicting exceptions in the Catholic Church; Brantôme himself is pleased to admit this fact: "Our bishops of today," he says, "are more discreet, at least wiser, hypocrites, hiding better their black vices, as a certain great personage one day remarked to me. And that which I have to say of certain of them, in the old days as well as in the present, and of their abuses, that is not true of all please God! For in all times, there have been many, regular as well as secular, of very good and holy life, even as there still are and as there will be, by the grace of God, who loves and never abandons His people."

However, in the interest of truth, and without desiring to detract from the homage payed by Brantôme to the irreproachable conduct of certain prelates, we shall go on to compare with the facts and calculations cited by the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, a judicial document of which Dulaure, who had it under his eyes, boldly guarantees the authenticity: It is an investigation, ordered by decree of the Parliament of Paris, at the

request of the syndics and consuls of the city of Aurillac, and made in 1555 by the lieutenant-general of the President of that city. We shall leave the matter to Dulaure, who analyzes this inquiry, in the course of which more than eighty witnesses were heard: "Charles de Senectaire, Abbot of the convent of Aurillac and lord of that city; his nephews, Jean Belveser, called Jonchières, a prothonotary, and Antoine de Senectaire, Abbot of Saint-Jean; his niece, Marie de Senectaire, Abbess of Bois, a convent of the same city, and the monks and religious of one and the other convent gave themselves to all the excesses of debauchery. Each monk lived, in the convent, with one or more concubines, girls whom he had debauched or seduced from under the paternal roof, or women whom he had ravished and seduced from their husbands. These monks fed and lodged these women with themselves, and the children who resulted, bastard infants, mounted in number to seventy, and they took ordinarily the offerings which were made to the church. . . . The Abbot had in the garden of the abbatial residence, a structure destined for his debauchees, adorned with obscene pictures and bearing the characteristic name of "*f. . . . oir de M. d'Aurillac*;" the priests were the ordinary purveyors of this infamous place; the abbot's nephews* also fulfilled the same shameful functions. They laid contributions not only on the city but on all the surrounding villages; they snatched young girls from the arms of their mothers in the light of open day, in the sight and hearing of the inhabitants; they braved public opinion, despite the tears and cries of their victims, whom they drove with kicks and blows of the fist to the convent, where they were to serve the lubricity of the abbot, his nephews, and lastly, of the other monks." (*Hist. Civ. Phys. et Morale de Paris*, 12 mo. edition of 1825, Volume IV, page 522.) Does this not sound as though we were reading a page of the *Traité de la Polygamie Sacrée*? As a result of this inquiry, the convent was secularized, and the city of Aurillac found itself at last delivered from its abominable tyrants.

*See the rhyme quoted some pages back.

After having read the resume of the judicial inquiry which Dulaure, unfortunately, has tarnished with his own inimical partiality, we are forced to repeat, with the author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France* (page 132): "Should we then be astonished if Mademoiselle de la Polygamie paws the earth, bounds and lechers in all the families of this realm, corrupting, polluting, and spoiling them by her incests and lecheries?" It must be remarked, however, that the license of manners among the clergy, and especially among the innumerable army of lay hangers-on, was the inevitable consequence of public demoralization at this time, when so few persons had a true idea of public decency (*honnêteté*) from the social point of view. The reformed religion, by its example and its bitter reprimands, aided much, it must be confessed, in purifying the manners of the Catholic clergy, which was soon to display so many chaste and glorious virtues.

CHAPTER XXXVII

BEFORE seeking to discover what was the state of Prostitution at the court of Henri III, we cannot, without leaving a noticeable lacuna in this history of manners, designedly omit to mention a species of depravation which left profound traces of its defilement on the reign of this last of the Valois. It is an abominable subject, and one which we shall treat with all the disgust which it inspires in us and with all the discretion and decency of language that is possible by making nearly literal extracts from contemporary works. It is impossible to concern oneself with the shameful epoch of Henri III. without speaking of that monarch's mignons and the turpitudes attached to the memory of their master. All the gravest and most serious historians, D'Aubigne, De Thou, Mézeray, etc., have not feared to soil their pages by reporting there, for the instruction of posterity, the abominations which defiled the private life of a Most Christian King; it was only Père Daniel who endeavored to justify it, or at least to protect it by his complacent reticence: "Although it is not necessary to credit," he says in his great *Histoire de France*, "all that the Huguenots and the Leaguers have written of his secret debauches, it is, on the other hand, difficult to believe that what was said was generally false." We shall not undertake to defend Henri III. and his mignons against those accusations which were then in all mouths, and which soon came to constitute the formidable voice of public opinion; but we do recognize, with Père Daniel, that the calumnies of the Huguenots, and later those of the Leaguers, smeared, so to speak, a thousand extravagant ordures upon a canvas unhappily all too realistic and all too scandalous. The horrible episode of the mignons of Henri III. appears to us to have been singularly exaggerated by the spirit of religious and political partisanship.

It cannot be denied that the arrival of the Italians in France, in the suite of Catherine de' Medici, exerted a definite and detestable influence on the manners of the courts; but if certain young and debauched seigneurs sometimes gave themselves to the imitation of the "*vilaines cotumes de Chouse*" (which was the term used in referring to French Italianism) they were careful not to boast of their infamous disorders, which were all too contrary to the national gallantry; they also energetically resisted a vice which inspired horror in all decent folk. But this wholly French shame came gradually to be abandoned, and tolerance came to take the place of an implacable indignation. "And if there were nothing beside that sodomy which we see today," cried Henri Estienne, in his *Apologie pour Hérodote*, published in 1576, but written previously, "might we not with good right call this century of ours the paragon of wickedness, if not of detestable and execrable vice?" The people, who formed the heart of the nation, remained, however, it must be stated, free of this *méchancté*, and the deplorable example of the court had been powerless to corrupt the ancient purity of the bourgeoisie. Sodomy, which was but an ordinary sin in Italy, where the sinner might find absolution by paying thirty-six tournois and nine ducats (see the *Taxes des Parties Casuelles de la Boutique du Pape*, translated by A. du Pinet, edition of Lyons, 1564, in-8), became in France a capital crime for which the offender was condemned to the pyre. It is true that the tribunals very rarely enforced this penalty, borne out in the law, when this crime, which was looked upon as an act of heresy, was not mingled with acts of magic, sorcery or atheism. "I am a knave," says Maître Janotus de Bragmardo, in his harangue to Gargantua (Rabelais, Book I, Chapter 20), "if they do not have you burned like *bougres*, traitors, heretics and seducers, enemies of God and of the virtues!" The libertines who were merely suspected of this indelible *macule* were, then, everywhere pointed out, "fled and abhorred," as Rabelais says. The French found it hard to pardon the Italians, established in France since the marriage of the

Dauphin Henri to the daughter of Lorenzo de Medici, Duke of Urbino, for having introduced a novel form of debauchery, as the French said. The author of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, in his epistle to Henri III., did not hesitate to denounce: "atheism, sodomy, and all other sinister or stinking academies which the stranger has introduced into France." . . . but, fifteen years before him, Henri Estienne had endeavored to revenge Italy and the Italians by launching the following cruel epigram against Nicolas Maillard of the Sorbonne: "Now I would not say that all those who are stained with this sin have learned it in Italy or in Turkey, for our Maistre Maillard professes it, and yet he has never been in those countries."

We have shown elsewhere that the expeditions into Italy had been fatal to French manners; the constant relations which existed between the two countries since the reign of Charles VIII could not have failed to spread odious elements of corruption among the nobility and the army. Henri Estienne describes thus the hideous instruction which Italy had given France: "To return to this infamous sin," he says in his *Apologie pour Hérodote* (page 107 of the original edition of 1566), "is it not a great pity that some who, before setting foot in Italy, abhorred the very talk of such things, after having dwelt there, take pleasure not only in speaking of it, but in making a profession of it among themselves as of something they have learned at a good school?" But although Italian vice had made such saddening progress at the court of France, all men of honor still maintained a profound contempt for these unworthy deserters of *l'amour français*,* which latter alone was "approved and recommended," according to the expression of Brantôme. We find in the writings of Brantôme evidence of the feeling of repulsion which was aroused by these filthy and ignoble distractions, even at a time when Prostitution no longer knew any bounds: "Thus have I heard tell from a very gallant man of my time," Brantôme says, in his *Dames Galantes*, "and it is also true, that no *bougre* (bugger) nor

*"French love" in the underworld of today would mean just the reverse; it would mean the same as "Italian love" did then.

bardache (bardash) was ever brave, valiant, and generous,† except the great Julius Caesar; also, that, by divine will, such abominable ones are cast down and subject to reproof. In which I am astonished that a number, whom I have seen defiled with this repulsive vice, have continued in the great prosperity of Heaven, but God awaits them, and, in the end, we shall see what is to become of them.” Brantôme, who had a conscience so large and so unafraid in matters of gallantry, haughtily displays his disgust at vices contrary to nature; this was at the very moment when the court of Henri III. was brazenly assuming those Italian manners which he condemns and brands in his *Dames Galantes*, which still may be looked upon as the repertoire of 16th. century debauchery. Brantôme wrote, it is true, this treatise of lubricious morality, under the inspiration of the Queen of Navarre, Marguerite de Valois, who had been put at the head of the *bande des dames*. There was thus at the court of Charles IX. a sort of feminine coalition, formed to oppose the shameful excesses of an “Italianized” youth. “I should not be greatly astonished,” says Henri Estienne, in his *Deux Dialogues du Langue Francois Italianisé*, “if the ladies, Italianizing in their language, like the men, have also desired to Italianize in other things.”

When Henri III., who was King of Poland, was called to succeed his brother, Charles IX., the Italians had already obtained a great foothold at the court of France; but their villainous manners were only propagated secretly, and no one dared to avow himself a member of their band. Thus, the poet to the King, Étienne Jodelle, who was looked upon as a herald of unnatural love, was dishonored even in the eyes of his friends of the Pleiades by prostituting his muse to compose, by Charles IX.’s order it was said, the *Triomphe de Sodome*. “He was employed by the late King Charles,” relates Pierre de l’Estoile, who has reported in his *Registres Journaux* the “very miserable and frightful” end of this Parisian poet, “as the most villainous and lascivious of

†This would appear to be true of the species as a whole (certainly of the commoner types) despite numerous fine exceptions stressed by such writers on sex as Ellis, Carpenter, etc.

all, to write the *arriere hilme* (*hymne*), to what the late King called the sodomy of his provost of Nantouillet." (See the *Journal de Henri III.*, edition of MM. Champollion, page 29, under the year 1573.) When Henri III. had quitted France to betake himself to Poland, where a crown was awaiting him, we may be assured he was not stained with the shameful vice which he contracted upon his return to the realm of his fathers. He had always been, from his earliest youth, inclined to luxury, ardent in pleasure, sensual and a libertine; but although surrounded with perverse and voluptuous courtiers, he had not yet abandoned himself to the culpable errors of Italian debauchery. It would be difficult to say whether he had acquired this infamous taste in Poland or at Venice, where he passed a few days upon returning to take possession of the throne of France. "Since the death of the Princess of Conde," says Mézeray, in his *Abregé Chronologique de l'Histoire de France* (Volume V, page 251), "Henri III had had little attachment for women, and his adventure in Venice had given him another penchant." This adventure in Venice was none other than a venereal malady, which the King had contracted in passing, and from which he had difficulty in freeing himself. The Princess of Conde, Mary of Clèves, whom Henri III. loved to distraction, died at Paris on Saturday, the 30th of October, six weeks after having seen once more her royal lover, who had come back to her in a piteous condition following his adventure in Venice. Following are the dates which permit us to fix, in a manner nearly certain, the period at which the King's frightful carryings-on began.

Barely was Henri III. back at the Louvre than he was to be seen forming about him a court of mignons and "Italians." These latter at first aroused in the people of Paris a feeling of irritation, which was not slow in becoming an implacable hatred. The scholars of the University set themselves up as the interpreters of this wholly national hatred and would pursue the Italian *bande* with songs, *pastiles* and insulting placards. There were riots and murders upon the occasion of a quarrel which

had been provoked by the bad manners of these strangers. In the month of July, 1575, a brave captain named La Vergerie was condemned to death and hanged for having remarked publicly that, in this quarrel, "there was nothing to do but take the side of the scholars and cut the throats of all those Italian *bougres* who were the cause of France's ruin." Pierre de l'Estoile, who relates the captain's sad end, affirms that the King assisted at the execution, although not having approved this "iniquitous" judgment; but we may suppose that the "hasty trial" (*procès bien court*) of this unfortunate one had not been held without the express order of Henri III., although the Chancellor René de Buigue, had had personal charge of it. Following the condemnation and punishment of La Vergerie, "the people attacked, by all sorts of writings and pamphlets (not being able to do worse) the Italian messires and the Queen (Catherine de Medici), their good patron and mistress." Pierre de l'Estoile collected a number of these satires among other stanzas and sonnets against the Italians, to whom were imputed all the evils and all the disorders of the realm.

But the following year, it was no longer a case of the Italians, for it seemed as though the mignons had caused them to disappear. Pierre de l'Estoile, that faithful echo of all the gossip of his time, wrote, under date of July, 1576, in his *Registres Journaux*: "The name of mignons began, at this time, to be heard in the mouths of the people, to whom they were very odious, as much for their actions, which were haughty and insulting, as for their rouge and their feminine and immodest accoutrements, but especially on account of the immense gifts and liberality which the King gave and showed them, since in the opinion of the people they were the cause of his ruin, although the truth is that the result of such liberality, not being able to remain in their hands a single moment, was at once transmitted to the people, as water is by a conduit. These fine mignons wore their hair long, curled and recurled by artificial devices, and gathered up above their little velour bonnets in the manner of the whores, to say nothing of the ruffles on their shirts, of fine stuffs, starched

and half a foot long, in such a fashion that to see their heads above their ruffles it looked as though it were the head of Saint John on a platter. The rest of their habiliments were the same; their exercises were to game, blaspheme, leap, dance, vault, quarrel and lecher, and to follow the King everywhere and into all companies; and not to do or say anything that was not to his pleasure; caring little, the truth is, for God and virtue, being content to be in the good grace of their master, whom they feared and honored more than God." (See the *Journal de Henri III.*, edition of MM. Champollion.)

This passage is very important, in that it fixes in a positive manner the date of the appearance of the mignons, or at least the period when they began to be hated by the people. Otherwise, Pierre de l'Estoile does not say anything which describes their unnatural manners, and the portrait which he gives of them might be applied to all the courtiers. Following this portrait, he records a poem, composed in fifteen strophes, "which was published at this time at Paris and divulged everywhere under this title: *Les Vertus et Propriétés des Mignons* (The Virtues and Properties of Mignons), 25th of July, 1576." The editors of the *Journal de Henri III.* do not publish more than six of the strophes of this poem, which is printed in full with the title of *Indignitez de la Cour* (Indignities of the Court), in the *Cabinet du Roy de France* (page 297). There are certain differences between the two texts, but we may remark that, in neither is the accusation of sodomy formulated against the mignons except in the form of an insulting doubt:

*Ces beaux mignons prodiguement
Se veautrent parmy leurs delices,
Et peut-estre dedans telz vices
Qu'on ne peut dire honnestement.**

*Those fine lads are schooled in all
Delights that are most nice,
And, it may be, in many a vice
One would not honest call.

The anonymous author, who is certainly a good poet, attacks especially the dissoluteness and the luxury of their habits, which he looks upon as shameful signs of their misconduct. Following are a few strophes in which the costume of Henri III and his favorites is described with much exactitude:

*Leur parler et leur vestement
Se voit tel, qu'une honneste femme
Auroit peur de recevoir blasme
S'habillant si lascivement:
Leur col ne se tourne à leur aise
Dans le long replis de leur fraise;
Déjà le froment n'est pas bon
Pour l'empoix blanc de leur chemise:
Il faut, pour facon plus exquise,
Faire de riz leur amidon.*

*Leur poil est tondu par compas,
Mais non d'une facon pareille;
Car, en avant, depuis l'aureille,
Il est long, et, derrière, bas:
Il se tient droit par artifice,
Car une gomme le hérisse
Ou retord ses plis refrisez,**

*The words they speak, the clothes they wear
Are such as any honest dame
Would blush from fear and very shame
To be seen in anywhere;
Their necks are never at their ease.
In ruffled folds that greatly please
Their fancy, while wheat's not so white
As is the bosom of the chemise
Which they affect, the sight to tease;
Their starch like rice is fair and light.

They trim their tresses by the chart,
But not in any even sort:
Behind, they wear it very short,
And long in front, with mincing art:
It stands erect with cunning grace; ♀
They use a gum to keep't in place
And to preserve its charming curl,

*Et, dessus leur teste légère,
Un petit bonnet par derrière
Les monstre encor plus desguisez.*

*Je n'ose dire que le fard
Leur soit plus commun qu'à la femme;
J'aurois peur de leur donner blâme
Qu'entre eux ils pratiquassent l'art
De l'impudique Ganimède.
Quant à leur habit, il excède
Leur bien et un plus grand encor;
Car le mignon, qui tout consomme,
Ne se vest plus en gentilhomme,
Mais, comme un prince, de drap d'or.**

We have followed by preference the text of the *Cabinet du Roy de France*, but it is well to observe that, in this text, the poet practically avoids permitting a suspicion that these mignons "practiced the art of the immodest Ganymede;" on the other hand, in the version, evidently altered, furnished us by the *Journaux* of l'Estoile, the sense is quite different, for the author there states very positively that which he "does not dare to say:"

*While on the light head of each dear
A little bonnet, perched in the rear,
Disguises him like any girl.

I should not say that they make use
Of rouge as much as any dame,
And I should hesitate to blame
Their ways, or say that they abuse
Themselves like Ganymedes.
As to their clothing, it exceeds
Their state and more, when all is told:
For the mignon who gets all he can
Dresses not like a gentleman,
But, like a prince, in cloth of gold.

(It is interesting to compare the pommades and other artifices of the modern "sheik" influenced by Valentino and other cinema idols.)

*Je n'ose dire que le fard
 Leur est plus commun qu'à la femme
 (J'aurois peur d'en recevoir blâme),
 Et qu'entre eux ils pratiquent l'art
 De l'impudique Ganimède.*

We have here a very significant insinuation, and one that is equivalent to a formal declaration. In another passage in this piece of verse, these "effeminate" are reproached with having trafficked in, exchanged, sold, and dispensed the benefices and

*Les biens voués au crucifix,
 Que l'on leur baille en mariage,
 En guerdon de maquerillage
 Ou pour chose de plus vil prix.**

It would appear to us to be a fact, established by this satire, dated 1576, that the mignons of Henri III, in the beginning were not looked upon as impure agents of Italian debauchery. They were accused merely of devouring the substance of the people, exhausting the coffers of the State, wearing indecent habits and living in luxurious idleness. Another poet takes it upon himself to reply to the *Indignités* of the court, and he does so in a high-flown and flowery poem which he calls *Les Blasons de la Cour*: without taking account of the indirect imputations concerning the manners of the courtiers, he merely blames the "satiric tongues and mordant wits" with having spread the report that the court of France was "a stable,"

Un retrait des abus, des dissolutions.†

*The Church's goods they barter, slice;
 They show no scruple in robbing her
 To provide a dot for a panderer,
 Or something of more vile a price.

†A den of abuses, of dissoluteness.

One might, therefore, deduce, from the very terms of this poetic factum, that the debauchery of the mignons was not at first marked out and branded with the red iron of public disapproval. There were, undoubtedly, many who were blameworthy and reprehensible in their conduct, but calumny, in attacking them, invented everything which might render them more odious and dishonorable. Hence the infamous role which was attributed to the mignons, that is to say, to all those men, young and voluptuous for the most part, who formed the "King's band" (*bande du roi*). What had been at first but a sad exception among the disorderly favorites of Henri III. came to be looked upon as a general vice, and the court of France came to be looked upon thus, in the eyes of an indignant people, as the seat of the most abominable Prostitution. Dulaure has reason to say that Henri III. "was distinguished from his predecessors by his effeminate tastes, and especially by his ultra-montane debaucheries." (*Hist. de Paris*, Volume IV., page 493, 12 mo. edition.) But the fact must be recognized that the Huguenots and the Leaguers were not without blame when it came to spreading this redoubtable calumny against the King and his mignons: "The infamy which the ladies and maids of the court had incurred," says Dulaure, with too great a show of partiality, "was extended during this latter reign to the young courtiers, who, more despicable than the women, gave themselves with their master, to the most disgusting excesses of debauchery."

The mignons were young seigneurs of good family and fine bearing whom René de Villequier and Francois d'O, who presided over the pleasures of the King, had introduced to the intimacy of that Prince. The best known among them were Jacques de Lévy de Caylus, François de Maugrion, Jean Darcet de Liveraut, François d'Epinay de Saint-Luc, Paul Estuer de Caussade de Saint-Mesgrin, Anne de Joyeuse, Bernard and Jean-Louis de Nogaret, both sons of Jean de la Valette. The others were less well known, for the reason that they did not possess so much favor with Henri III: their names were never heard beyond the

court. Some of them, however, are designated in a sonnet which was circulated throughout Paris in 1577, and which has been preserved in the *Registres-Journaux* of Pierre de l'Estoile. This sonnet might serve to prove that the mignons were not always "spoiled" (*gâtés*) by the same turpitudes.

*Saint-Luc, petit qu'il est, commande bravement
A la troupe Haultefort, que sa bourse a conquise;
Mais Quelus, dédaignant si pauvre marchandise,
Ne trouve qu'en son c . . . tout son advancement;*

*D'O, cest archi larron, hardy, ne scay comment,
Aime le jeu de main, craint aussi peu la prise;
L'Archant, d'un beau semblant, veut cacher sa sottise;
Sagonne est un peu bougre et noble nullement;*

*Montigny fait le begue, et voudroit bien sembler
Estre honneste homme un peu, mais il n'y peult aller;
Riberac est un sot, Tournon une cigale;*

*Saint-Mesgrin, sans subject bravache audacieux:
Je parlerois plus haut, sans la crainte des dieux,
De ceux qui tiennent rang en la belle cabale.**

This "villainous" (*vilain*) sonnet, as De l'Estoile says, "showing the corruption of the century and the court," contains, as it

*Saint-Luc, the little dear, doth bravely rule
The Haultefort gang, by virtue of his purse;
But Quelus, disdainful, merely doth disburse
Another merchandise: he is no fool.

D'O's an arch-robber, bold and very cool:
I know not how, but he with sports doth nurse
His strength, while stupid l'Archant hides his curse;
As for Sagonne: a villain, like the rule.

Montigny stammers he's an honest wight,
And would appear one—but not in our sight;
Tournon's an insect, Riberac's a dunce;

Saint-Mesgrin's of the boldest, by all odds:
And I might well, without fear of the gods,
Speak loudlier, were I but started once.

seems to us, only the names of those mignons who lent themselves to the most hideous Prostitution; by the "gods" whom the poet does not dare to name we are to understand the King and his two assessors, d'O and Villequier, with some others, who shared the mastership of Italian debauchery. Pierre de l'Estoile also pictures the mignons for us as "ruffled and curled, with elevated crests, with *ratepennades* on their heads, a rouged appearance, with an ostentation of the same, painted, diapered and pulverized with violent powders, and with odoriferous scents, which aromaticized the streets, places and houses which they frequented." This abuse of perfumes, these effeminate modes, these ridiculous or bizarre habits constitute the only griefs which this curious and gossipy chronicler appears to have against the mignons, but he in no wise describes their manners so as to lead us to believe that he gave credence to the rumors which were circulated about them; he is content with collecting scrupulously the satires and epigrams which especially prove the stubborn hatred of the public toward Henri III. and his favorites. Most of the latter, by the way, perished miserably, some slain in duels, others assassinated in ambushes, a number of them victims of various accidents; the horror which they inspired in the people was reflected in their funeral orations, but the insults and maledictions with which their memory was laden had no direct connection with authentic and notorious circumstances of their libidinous lives, which were always covered with an impenetrable veil.

This veil, the Protestant writers and those of the League endeavored to raise a long time after the mignons had disappeared, and the traditions concerning the court, disfigured and envenomed by malevolence were reflected in a number of satiric works, which were not printed until the reign of Louis XIII., that is to say, twenty-five or thirty years after the death of Henri III. There had appeared during the lifetime of this Prince only a few pieces in verse and prose which were circulated at Paris under cover and which never received a momentary publicity

until after the Barricades; but previous to that, other pieces, still more infamous, had been circulated and "divulged" (*divulguées*), without any printer daring to bring them out. Pierre de l'Estoile collected a number of these pieces in the *Registres-Journaux* and the *Ramas de Curiosites*, which he devoted to the anecdotal and scandalous history of his times; all the editors of the *Journal de Henri III.* recoiled before the prospect of publishing smutty poems which were but sorry monuments to the horrible reputation of the mignons. In the last edition, which we owe to the intelligent care of MM. Champollion, we read merely, under date of the 10th. of September, 1850: "Divers poems and satiric writings were published against the King and his mignons, in those three years, 1577, 1578 and 1579; the which, for being the most of them so impious and so villainous that the paper on which they were written blushed, would have been, with their authors, worthy only of the flames in any other century except this one which appears to be the final sewer of all those preceding. Among the titles: *La Catzrie des Trésoriers et des Mignons*, by M. . . , A fool and a Leaguer; the villianous sonnet to Saint Luc; a *Pasquil courtezan*, that is to say one smutty, villainous and lascivious, which was current at court in that year, 1579, and which was there quite common; and there were also certain villainous verses which were written up over the door of the Abbey of Poissy one day when the King entered there." Each time that one of the King's mignons was taken away by a tragic death, to the inconsolable grief of his "good master," when Caylus, Maugrion, Schomberg and Riberac were slain in duels, when Saint Mesgrin was assassinated one evening at the door of the Louvre, there occurred in all Paris, and even in the court, an outburst of atrocious pamphlets against the "ruffled mignons," but it would be unjust to regard these pamphlets as the loyal expression of historic truth; they represented the perfidious vengeance of the court rather than true political passions. There were not lacking among the clerks of the palace and the University poets to "blazon" the mignons in

vers courtisans, "that is to say, verses of little decency, filthy and villianous, after the mode of the court, even when they touched the honor of the King," according to the definition given us by Pierre de l'Etoile.

Here, for example, is a satiric sonnet, which was current at Paris in 1578, and which came from the *boutique* of the League:

*Gammèdes (sic) effrontés, impudique canaille,
Cerveaux ambitieux, d'ignorance comblés,
C'est l'injure du temps et les gens mal zelés,
Qui vous font prosperer sous un roi fait de paille.*

*Ce n'est ni par assault ni par grande bataille,
Qu'avez eu la faveur, mais pour estre alliés
D'un corrompu esprit, l'un à l'autre enfilés,
Guidés de vostre chef, qui les honneurs vous baille,*

*Qui vos teints damoiseaux, vos perruques troussées,
Aime, autant comme escus et lames et espées.
Puisque les grands estats qui vous rendent infames*

*Sont de vice loïers aux jeunes impudents,
Gardez-les à tousjours, car les hommes vaillans
N'en veulent après vous, qui estes moins que femmes!**

*Immodest rabble, Ganymedes without awe,
Ambitious brains, laden with ignorance,
It is the times, unhappy circumstance,
Which make you prosper with a king of straw.

'Tis not from battle-prowess that you draw
Your royal favor, but that you enhance
A mind corrupt and, led by your chief, chance
Your fortunes without fear of right or law.

He loves your well-trussed wigs and girlish faces
Better than blades and swords, the manly graces.
Then, those high offices, which each defiles,

Which are to young and bold-faced rascals given,—
Keep them forever; even knaves unshriven
Would not succeed your sickly woman-wiles.

This unheard-of outbreak against the mignons merely increased during the whole of Henri III.'s reign, and the people, always ready to believe whatever is strange and monstrous, were only too ready to accept with defiance the frequently ridiculous calumnies on the subject of the "holy band" (*bande sacrée*).

Thus, it had been pretended very seriously that Jean-Louis Nogaret, Duke of Epernon, whom Pierre de l'Estoile calls the "arch-mignon" of the King, and who became, as a matter of fact, the principal favorite of Henri III., after the death of the "great mignons," Caylus and Maugrion, was none other than a demon sent from Hell to complete the corruption and damnation of the unfortunate Henri of Valois. This diabolic legend was related at length in a pamphlet entitled: *Les choses horribles contenues en une Lettre envoyée à Henri de Valois par un enfant de Paris, le 28 janvier 1589, et imprimée sur la copie qui a été trouvée en ceste ville de Paris, près de l'Orloge du Palais, par Jacques Grégoire, imprimeur.* MDLXXXIX.

The *Enfant de Paris*, whom P. de l'Estoile calls a "rascal and tool of the League" (*faquin et vaunéant de la Ligue*), relates in this letter, filled with obscenities, that the sorcerers and enchanters had given the King "for his pleasure" (*en jouissance*) a familiar spirit, named Terragon, and that this spirit, under the features of a young boy, had been presented to His Majesty at the Louvre as a gentleman of Gascony. The King had no sooner seen this gentleman than he called him brother and commanded him to sleep in his chamber. Now the Duke of Epernon was none other than this vile Terragon.

The *Enfant de Paris* enters, regarding the arch-mignon of the King, into marvelous details descriptive of his immodest *diablerie*. These details are so horrible that the MM. Champollion have not dared reproduce them, reprinting only by extracts, the letter of the *Enfant de Paris*, in the appendix to their edition of the *Journal de Henri III.*, which forms a part of the *Collection des Mémoires Relatifs à l'Histoire de France*, published by MM. Michaud and Poujoulat.

There does not exist, perhaps, more than a single copy of the original edition of this "illustrious tomfoolery" (*badauderie insignée*), as P. de l'Estoile describes it; but this collector of "fiddle-faddle" (*fadaises*) has inserted a copy in his own hand into his great folio collection, composed of printed placards and engravings in wood, and entitled: *Les belles Figures et Drolleries de la Ligue*. This precious and singular collection is preserved today in the department of printed books of the Imperial library.

The people ordinarily attributed to the sorcerers those infamies of which Henri III. was accused by the voice of public opinion; these infamies appeared to the credulous mob as the natural consequences of the sorceries imputed to the unhappy King. Thus, no one at Paris doubted that the mignons, and above all the Duke of Epernon, were allied to their master by a diabolic pact, and everyone was convinced, when it was announced in the pulpit that material proofs of their abominable sacrileges had been discovered at the Louvre and the *Bois de Vincennes*, in the apartment of the King.

"There were two satyrs of gilded silver, of the height of four thumbs, holding each in the left hand and supporting it above him a heavy club, and in the right sustaining a crystal vase, pure and very shining, elevated upon a round base, sustained by four feet of pedestal. In these vases there were unknown drugs, which they had for oblations, and what was more, and more to be detested, they were in front of a cross of gold, in the middle of which there had been chased in wood the true Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ." This description, which we extract from a pamphlet which appeared at the time under this title: *Les Sorcelleries de Henri de Valois et les oblations qu'il faisoit au diable dans le Bois de Vincennes, avec la figure des démons d'argent doré, aux quels il faisoit offrandes* (Paris, Didier Millot, 1589), is, quite simply, that of two incense burners, placed in an oratory, on each side of a crucifix!

The author of the pamphlet indicates the impure and sacrilegious use which he assigns to these pretended idols by saying: "It

is known that the pagans revered the satyrs as the gods of woods and desert places, because they thought that from them came skill in lechery."

It is impossible to cleanse the memory of Henri III. of the stains which dishonor it, but it may be affirmed that the turpitudes with which this Prince and his mignons stand branded before the tribunal of history, were not as frequent, nor as shameless, nor as unheard of as one might suppose from reading the accusations of the Leaguers and the Huguenots. Thus, it is our opinion that, in many circumstances, the attachment of the King for his mignons was free of all degrading impurity, and we have not the courage to see a shameful passion in the evidence of friendship and regret which Henri III. gave publicly upon the death of Caylus and Maugrion, when he wept for and kissed them, "both dead together" (*tous deux morts*), as l'Estoile relates, when he had their heads shorn to save their blond locks, and when he took from Caylus the earrings which he had given him and which he had attached with his own hand. Nothing is more touching also, than the death of Caylus, who repeated with his last sigh: "Ah, my King! My King!" Nothing is more respectable than the grief of a king at the loss of a friend. But the people judged otherwise and viewed with an evil eye the pompous tombs erected in honor of these young effeminate whom they abhorred. The people, blinded and irritated by the maneuvers of anarchic parties, had taken an aversion to all the things they looked upon as the origin of their misery; they were but too well disposed to credit the horrors which they heard regarding the manners of the King and his entourage; they permitted themselves to be misled by appearances, and they felt themselves prejudiced in advance against the courtiers, whose favorite recreations were masquerades or processions. The preachers, by their furious declamations exercised at that time the most unfortunate influence over public opinion, and Henri III. had cause to repent not having closed their mouths; after having villified and defamed him, they had him assassinated by Jaques Clement. "On the day of *quaresme*

prenant," we read in the *Journal de Henri III*, under date of the 20th of February, 1583, "the King and his mignons were masked in the streets of Paris, where they committed a thousand insolences, and by night they went from house to house, in companies, up to six o'clock in the morning on the first day of Lent, on which day the majority of the preachers of Paris in their sermons cursed them openly for their said insolences the night before."

It was undoubtedly to do penance for these follies that the King, a few days afterward, instituted the Confraternity of Penitents, with processions like those of the *Battus* of Rome, in which the members, clad in white linen sacks, marched two abreast, singing psalms and fustigating themselves. But the mignons figured also in these processions, and their presence spoiled the effect. "I have been advised on good authority," cried the monk Poncet, who preached the Lenten sermon at Nôtre Dame, "that last night the spit turned for the supper of these fine penitents, and that after having eaten a fat capon, they had for their midnight collation the *petit tendron* which had been kept in waiting for them!" The preacher was imprisoned by order of the King, and the processions, lighted by torches, kept up; the King assisted in them, always clad in the costume of the Confraternity and surrounded by his mignons: "There were some, even among the mignons, according to what is said," reports P. de l'Estoile, "who lashed themselves in this procession, and whose poor backs were seen to be all red from the blows which they gave themselves. On which there were made a number of *quatrains* and *pasquils*, *sornettes* and likely *vilainies*, which were made and disseminated on this lashing and new penitence of the King and his mignons." Henri III., according to the historians, had conceived these processions and public penances to expiate the villainous sins with which he secretly reproached himself, and into which he constantly fell back; he obliged the mignons, being his accomplices, to appear in these ceremonies, and there play the role of penitents; he went with them to visit the churches and convents, to make the Stations of the Cross and say prayers, to listen to the sermons and to gain

indulgences. These were, the people remarked, merely preparations and encouragements to sin the more thereafter. The people were assured that the King had caused to have painted in his prayer book the portraits of his mignons in friars' habits. (See the *Confession de Sancy*, Chapter 8). It was related that he caused the companions of his devotions and his debaucheries to be lashed in his presence in his private chamber; it was asserted also that the Confraternity of Penitents had only been instituted in order to recruit vile followers and to propagate, under the cloak of a religious association, the infamous principles of sodomy. The *Journal de Henri III.* informs us, as a matter of fact, that among the masters of ceremonies of the Confraternity was one Du Peirat, "a fugitive from Lyons for the crime of atheism and sodomy." It is easy to divine why the people called the Penitents "brothers of the closet" (*confrères du cabinet*) and "ministers of the sacred band" (*ministres de la bande sacrée*).

Sully, who gives us, in his *Oeconomies Royales*, a list of mignons, in which we remark, in addition to those already named, Bellegarde, Souvré, du Bouchage and Thermas, makes no allusion to their manners, and says merely that each of them had been in succession the "favorite" of the King. The learned Le Duchat, in his notes on the *Confession de Sancy*, names four more mignons, after the *Memoires de l'Estat de la France Sous Charles IX.* and the letters of Estienne Pasquier: "Le Voyer, Sire of Lignerolles; Pibrac; Roissy and Vic de Ville, who," adds the commentator, "were not looked upon as being equally vicious and corrupt." However this may be, all those gentlemen whom the King honored with a particular sympathy and intimacy were at once dishonored with the title of mignons or hermaphrodites. This latter name, less popular and more refined than the other, indicated the sort of Prostitution to which they owed, it was said, their standing at court and their fortune. Agrippa d'Aubigné, the Juvenal of this epoch, which he pictures for us as still more depraved than that of Nero and Domitian, devotes his verse and

prose to flaying the mignons of Henri III. "Yes," he cries, in his *Tragiques* (Book II, page 83):

*Oui, les Hermaphrodites, monstres effeminez,
Corrompus bourdeliers, et qui estoyent mieux nez
Pour valets de putains que seigneurs sur les hommes,
Sont les monstres du siècle et du temps où nous sommes!**

Les Tragiques Donnez au Public par le Larcin de Prométhée were not printed until 1616 (*au désert*, in quarto, without name of author), but these admirable satires had been written in the youth of Agrippa d'Aubigné, who, while a zealous Calvinist, was none the less a man of honor and a great historian. Another work, equally satiric, but less passionate and less cruel than that of the poet of the *Tragiques*, had also been composed about this time to pillory the dissolute manners of Henri III.'s court; it did not see the light of day until a long while after its preparation, but a good while before the poem of d'Aubigné. We may therefore, look upon it as a contemporary document, deserving of more confidence than the pamphlets and the *pasquils*† of the time, although it was but an ingenious and witty allegory.

The book of which we have just spoken, and which is merciless toward the mignons, is entitled simply *Les Hermaphrodites* in the first edition, which was published at Paris in a small 12 mo. volume, without name of place and without date, about the year 1604. The frontispiece presents us with a portrait of Henri III, standing and wearing at once the habit and the trappings of a man and of a woman, with this device, significant enough: *à tous accords*. Beneath it are to be read six enigmatic verses:

*The Hermaphrodites, monsters effeminate,
Corrupt whore-masters, would keep better state
As brothel-valets; yet, behold, our lords,
The greatest monsters that our age affords.

†Cf., the Italian pasquinade, for a good account of which, see Edward Hutton's "*Pietro Aretino Scourge of Princes*," London, Constable and Company, 1922.

*Je ne suis male ny femelle,
 Et si je sçay bien en cervelle,
 Lequel des deux je dois choisir;
 Mais qu'importe à qui je ressemble?
 Il vaut mieux les avoir ensemble:
 On en reçoit double plaisir.**

The publication of this volume created a great sensation, especially at court, where a number of the ancient mignons, such as Bellegarde, Epernon, etc., had preserved all their standing without having to resort any more to means so shameful; the pamphlet was denounced to the King, and an effort was made to obtain a public condemnation of the author. But Henri IV., after having had *Les Hermaphrodites* read to him, refused to have the author hunted down, although he found the work "too free and too bold," saying that it "was against his conscience to chagrin a man for having spoken the truth." It is Pierre de l'Estoile who repeats to us this fine speech of Henri IV., in which we are forced to see the confirmation of historic facts mentioned by the author of the *Hermaphrodites*. Who was this author? L'Estoile names Artus Thomas; it has been sought to prove that this was Thomas Artus, Sire of Embry, an obscure and high-flown *littérateur*. Sorel, in his *Bibliothèque Française*, tells us that this book, "in which was to be found so many good things," was attributed to the Cardinal du Perron. It makes little difference to us whose was the elegant and acerb pen responsible for this piece, which was reprinted with the following more explanatory title: *L'Isle des Hermaphrodites Nouvellement Descouverte, Avec les Moeurs, Loix, Coustumes et Ordonnances des Habits d'Icelle*. This new title indicates that the author had taken upon himself the task of criticising especially

*Neither male nor female, I,
 It is to know which one, I sigh:
 To choose between them I am loath;
 But after all, what difference?
 Surely, there is no offense,
 But greater pleasure in choosing both.

the bizarre and indecent fashions of the court; these effeminate fashions are described, the truth is, so prolixly in the work, that we prefer to cite a passage of the *Tragiques*, in which d'Aubigné has summed up in very good verse a number of pages of the *Hermaphrodites*.

*Henry fut mieux instruit à juger des atours
Des putains de sa cour, plus propres aux amours:
Avoir ras le menton, garder la face pasle,
Le geste effeminé, l'oeil d'un Sardanapale,
Si bien qu'un jour des Rois, ce douteux animal,
Sans cervelle, sans front, parut tel en son bal:
De cordons emperlez sa chevelure pleine,
Sous un bonnet sans bord, fait à l'italienne,
Faisoit deux arcs voutez; son menton pinceté,
Son visage de rouge et de blanc empasté,
Son chef tout empoudré, nous monstrèrent l'idée,
En la place d'un roy, d'une putain fardée.
Pensez quel beau spectacle! et comme il fit bon voir
Ce prince avec un busc, un corps de satin noir
Coupe à l'espagnole, où des dechiquetures
Sortoient des passemens et des blanches tirures,
Et afin que l'habit s'entresuivist de rang,
Il monstroît des manchons gauffrez de satin blanc,**

*Henry was schooled in judging the attire
Of the harlots of his court, to fan love's fire:
Shaved neck, pale face, gestures effeminate,
The eye of Sardanapalus the Great—
Indeed, one day this doubtful animal,
No head or forehead, came thus to a ball:
His hair with pearly ornaments did shake
Under a bonnet of Italian make,
Two ribboned arches on his throat, laced tight,
His face all smeared with rouge and pasty white,
With powdered locks, looking less like a king
To the vulgar gaze than some rouged whorish thing.
A pretty sight it was, indeed, to see
This prince in busk and satin frippery
Cut in the Spanish style, with dainty vent
Under white fissures and the passement,
And, finally to suit his royal rank,
He forthright in white satin muff did swank,

*D'autres manches encor qui s'estendoient fendues,
 Et puis jusques aux pieds d'autres manches perdues.
 Pour nouveau parement, il porta, tout ce jour,
 Cet habit monstrueux, pareil à son amour;
 Si qu'au premier abord chascun estoit en peine
 S'il voyoit un roy-femme ou bien un homme-reine!**

The author of the *Hermaphrodites* spares us no details regarding the shameful costumes of his characters, their refinements of luxury and their coquetry; but he is very sober in the information he gives, and even in his allusions to the subject of their manners, which leads us to think that there exist certain lacunae in the text. It is easy to picture the secret acts of the officers of the *Hermaphrodite*, in that chamber which was called "the altar of Antinoüs, for the reason that the tapestry represented the loves of Adrian and Antinoüs," or in that gallery where were painted on the frescoes "the lascivious occupations of Sardanapalus and the meditations of Aretino, along with the metamorphoses of the gods and other such numberless representations very lively and naturally represented." We may readily conceive also all that the author has omitted to say, or all that has been cut out by his printer, when we remark, in the gallery dedicated to the legislators of debauchery, "a number of broken chairs, which might be lengthened, enlarged, lowered, or heightened, by means of a spring, as one desired; this was an hermaphroditic invention newly discovered in that country." The judgment of Henri IV, who found this work "too free and too bold," while recognizing that it was true, has no need of being justified by citations. This one quotation, however, drawn from the ordinances relating to the policing of the hermaphrodites, leaves no doubt as to the principal object which the author

*With sleeves, also, some fluted and some slit,—
 Oh, if there was a dandy, he was it!
 And as a novelty, he wore all day
 This habit monstrous as his amorous play:
 One did not know, when such a sight was seen,
 If it were woman—king, or manly queen!

had in view in this mordant satire on the mignons: "And inasmuch as all the beds are altars where we would that a perpetual sacrifice be made to the goddess Salambona, we desire that they shall be as rich as the rest, clothed and caparisoned for the use of the most secret friends; knowing also that the actions of the vulgar are committed under a sky called lunar, while the mysteries of Venus are elevated by two degrees above them, we propose that each shall have a double sky in his bed, and that he who is within shall not be less rich than he who is without; we desire that a history be made of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, disguises of the gods, and other similar things, to encourage the colder ones; that the rear shall be more remarkable than the front, for its size, as being more convenient to hermaphrodites, being the proper place for their intercourse. And since also the earth is not worthy of bearing a thing so precious we ordain that there shall be spread under the said beds a few rich *cairins* (rugs of Cairo) or other tapestries of silk." The author merely touches on his subject, with a delicacy which bears witness to the horror inspired in him by the life of the courtiers, and he avows that he turned away with disgust from "those who played and frolicked" (*ceux qui jouoient et folastroient*), "from fear of seeing," he says, "something which would, peradventure, not have been very agreeable to me."

It is necessary to come back to the writings of Agrippa d'Aubigné, in order to borrow from them the most characteristic descriptions of the Prostitution of the mignons. The grave and judicious De Thou has not deigned to introduce into his History some of the anecdotes which are to be found even in the *Confession de Sancy*: that of the *Sardacane*, for example, proves at least that the King was not so hardened in vice that he was incapable of remorse. It was about the year 1580 that Saint-Luc and Joyeuse, ashamed and tired of their condition, desired to be free of it by making their master blush for his debaucheries, which they themselves could no longer dare save with an invincible repugnance. According to the advice of the Countess

of Retz, whom they both loved, they pierced the wall of Henri III.'s closet and "ran through the side of the bed, between the counterpane and the curtains, a bronze air-tube (*sarbacane*), by means of which they planned to counterfeit an angel," according to the account which d'Aubigné gives of the adventure (*Hist. Universelle*, Book II, Chapter V, Volume III); the plan was to convey into the ear of the King the warnings and threats of Heaven, in order to correct his hideous habits. The stratagem succeeded beyond the hopes of Saint-Luc and Joyeuse, for Henri III had no sooner heard the mysterious voice summoning him to mend his ways, under pain of being thunderstruck like the perverse inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, than he swore not to fall back any more into his sin and to bring his mignons to repentance. The poor sinner became so frightened that at the least clap of thunder, he would run to hide under his bed, and if the lightning kept up, he would flee to the caves of the Louvre. But Joyeuse took pity on the King's deplorable state, and, to cure him of his terrors, he confessed everything, accusing Saint-Luc. The latter had time to flee before the wrath of Henri III. could reach him, and took refuge in the city of Brussels, of which he was governor, abjuring forever his heresies as a mignon. De Thou reports the same adventure, but he assigns as Saint-Luc's accomplice François d'O, in place of Joyeuse, and he attributes to the wife of Saint-Luc, who was Jeanne de Cossé-Brissac, the invention of the *sarbacane*. Later, despite the stigma originally attaching to his name, the ex-mignon, François d'Epinay, Seigneur de Saint-Luc became grand master of the artillery and Marshal of France under the reign of Henri IV. "This poor lad had a horror of this villainy," says Agrippa d'Aubigné, in the *Confession de Sancy*, "and was forced the first time: the King causing him to take a look in a box, while the grand prior and Camille passed the lid over his loins, and this was called taking the hare in the trap (*prendre le lièvre au*

colet)* and so it may be seen, this honest man was put to the trade by force." The dishonor of the unfortunate favorite was conveyed to the court by this smutty anagram, which Rochepot had found in the name of Saint-Luc: *cats in c.* . . .

The angel of the *sarbacane* had left in the mind of the King a salutary tendency to fear the chastisements of God: hence, those processions, those penances, those solemn expiations. But we hesitate to believe that, as d'Aubigné tells us, "fear is one of the exquisite artifices of voluptuaries;" we repel with horror those monstrous calumnies, which the Leaguers, rather than the Huguenots, had distilled like a frightful poison, with the object of annihilating royalty by stigmatizing the King. It is hard to understand how d'Aubigné could obstinately repeat these indignities, in his *Tragiques*, in his *Histoire Universelle* and in his *Confession de Sancy*. He might have left to the pamphlets of the League those rosaries from Rome, those blessed beads which the King distributed to all the *confrères du cabinet*, ordering them that "their pleasures should be practiced with the said chaplets;" this "sacred" mass,† which was said at the head of the King's bed and which was marked by "ornaments accommodated to this sin;" those "*lavemens d'eschine*" and those clysters of holy water which the mignons employed in the guise of a preservative against the fire of Heaven! Sauval, in his historic and secret memoirs on the loves of the kings of France, does not hesitate, in the face of the hideous profanations alleged by d'Aubigné, to take up the defense of Henri III: "All those abominations of Gomorrah," he says, "on which he was nourished, and which his satyr companions called the *amours sacrées*, as forbidding the love of women, were, rather, the vices of the great ones, and especially of his favorites, known as the *sacrée société* and the *bande sacrée*, than his own. Thus, it was of them

*See Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, First Part, First Day, the story entitled "Convent Sports," in my translation (p. 71): "And then, the big clown, setting about to hunt the hare in the hedge," etc. The figure was a common one.

†The "black mass" theme again. Cf., modern ritualistic orgies, which not infrequently break into the press as "cult murders," etc.

and of their monstrous lechery, in which they delighted, that it was said in those days: *In Spania, los cavalieros; in Francia, los grandes; in Alemania, pocos; in Italia, todos.*" And yet, we must accept as true a part of the statements in the *Confession de Sancy*, however infamous they may appear, and we are not to confound with the ignoble pamphleteers of the League the brave and loyal Agrippa d'Aubigné, who was the friend and companion in arms of the King, even when he exclaimed with a profound sentiment of indignation: "If I were to tell what was said to me in secret of the Prince of Condé, when they were for one whole night very content with the apprenticeship of the Count of Aubergne; or if I were to relate the banishment of young Rosny for being poorly furnished (*mal garny*);* of Noailles for having written over his bed these verses:

*Nul heur, nul bien ne me contente
Absent de ma divinité!†*

to which the king of Navarre set his hand:

*N'appelle pas ainsi ma tante
Elle aime trop humanité.‡*

by which it is seen that he loved women against the rules of sacred love, which caused him to be kicked out (*le fit chasser à coups de pied*) like the Duke of Longueville, for having demanded of the King his colors in a letter on illuminated paper; if I were to relate the nuptials of Quelus, the contract signed with the blood of the King and that of d'O as witnesses, by which he was married to Monsieur Le Grand;§ moreover, if I were to give the words of this grief-stricken Prince on the death of Maugrion, with his mouth glued between the two shameful parts! . . ."

*We have an underworld expression very similar to *garni*.

†No hour, no blessing satisfies me absent from my divinity.

‡Do not thus invite my aunt: She loves humanity too well.

§Similar "marriages" are not unheard of at all periods.

(See, in the *Confession de Sancy*, Chapter VII on the relics and devotions of the late King.)

When d'Aubigné wrote, in facetious form, these horrible revelations concerning the secret history of the Louvre, he had already been condemned to death two or three times for contumacy as an incorrigible Huguenot. He was in high favor at the court of Henri IV; he wore a gray beard which covered his neck, and he still felt boiling in his veins the implacable hatred inspired in him by vice which wore a crown; but, more than thirty years before, when, during the wars of 1577, he was residing at Casteljaloux, commanding some light cavalry of the Protestant army and, "regarding himself as dead for wounds received in the great combat," he had then formulated, almost in the same terms, the same accusations against Henri IV. and his courtizans, in the *Tragiques*, which were not published until twenty-five years later. It was then on a sick bed and facing approaching death that he vowed to the execration of posterity the hideous deeds and gestures of the mignons and their royal master. Following is the manner in which the poet paved the way for the historian:

*Quand j'oy qu'un roy transy, effraïé du tonnerre,
Se couvre d'une voute et se cache sous terre,
S'embusque de laurier, fait les cloches sonner;
Son peché, poursuivy, poursuit de l'estonner;
Qu'il use d'eau lustrale, il la boit, la consomme
En clystères infects; il fait venir de Rome
Les cierges, les agnus, que le pape fournit;
Bouche tous ses conduits d'un charmé grain-benit;
Quand je voy composer une messe complete,**

*When I hear a king, fright-chilled by thunder-clap,
Takes refuge underground as from a trap,
Puts laurel on his head and tolls the bell
As though it were his sin's pursuing knell,
Drinks lustral water in the clyster's soil,
From Rome brings candles as the Pope's own foil,
Agni and other spells to fit his needs,
Mouths all his conduits with holy beads,
Composing a mass complete to pay his debt,

*Pour repousser le ciel, inutile amulette;
 Quand la peur n'a cessé, par les signes de croix,
 Le braïer de Massé ny le froc de François:
 Tels spectres inconnus font confesser le reste;
 Le peché de Sodome et le sanglant inceste
 Sont reproches joyeux de nos impures cours.
 Triste, je trancheray ce tragique discours,
 Pour laisser aux pasquils ces effroyables contes,
 Honteuses veritez, trop veritables hontes!**

*Restraining heaven with an amulet,
 And when not even Holy Cross's sign,
 Masses' nor François' garments very fine
 Can stop his fright, while spectres do the rest
 And sin of Sodom, bloodiest incest
 Make him confess: these joys of our court
 Do sadden me and cause me to cut short
 This tragic tale, better left without a name,
 The shameful truth and the too truthful shame!

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ONE could not better paint the state of manners of the court at the end of the 16th century than by giving a picture of the disorderly private life of Marguerite of Valois, Queen of Navarre, first wife of Henri IV., and by setting down a few facts concerning the amours of her husband, amours immortalized under the name of the *Grand Alcandre*. This pair took pains mutually to unveil their secret adulteries, the Queen, in her *Mémoires*, where she enumerates, with much reserve and delicacy always, her griefs against a fitful and unfaithful spouse; the King in the famous *Divorce Satyrique*, that statement which he caused to be drawn up by Agrippa d'Aubigné or some other to serve as a set of instructions to the commissioners named to examine into the causes of separation which might exist between the royal pair. These two authentic fragments of the divorce suit were not printed until a long time afterward; but they were circulated in manuscript from the moment they were produced in connection with the case. They served to prove, in the most scandalous fashion, that the King of Navarre and his wife had nothing with which to reproach each other in the matter of libertinism and incontinence; this was, moreover, but the ordinary *train* of the court; and when the Princess of Conti wrote, in the form of a romance, the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, which completed the *Mémoires* of Marguerite of Valois, she did not feel that she was breaking the laws of fine gallantry by offering these examples of debauchery and depravation to the young nobility of France.

It would be difficult to review all the misdemeanors of Queen Marguerite, from the time of her precocious entrance upon a career of Prostitution at the age of eleven years, when "d'Enragues and Charins (for each believed that he was the first

to obtain that glory) had the first fruits of her warmth," as Henri IV. himself says, in the *Divorce Satyrique*. We have already reported elsewhere, with none too great a confidence, the odious rumors which were current during the reign of Charles IX. on the subject of the incestuous relations of Queen Margot with her three brothers; we shall not speak here of her first lovers, nor of Colonel Martigues, who loved her so distractedly that he always carried with him, even into the most dangerous sieges and skirmishes, an embroidered scarf and a little dog which she had given him as souvenirs; nor of the Duke of Guise, who "thought to come, through his immodest kisses, at something more;" nor of La Mole, who was decapitated in the Place de Greve, along with Coconnas, whose heart and certain relics still more strange were preserved in golden boxes; nor of Saint-Luc, whose "frequent and nocturnal consolations she received as she wept for her former lover;" nor of Bussy, who, however brave he may have been, had the reputation of being "none too brave with the ladies, on account of a certain colic which ordinarily took him at midnight." The *Divorce Satyrique* goes on to cite, among those who obtained the favors of the Princess, the Duke of Mayence, "good companion, big and fat, and as voluptuous as she;" the Viscount of Turenne, whom she soon gave his congé, "finding his figure disproportionate in a certain place;" Lebole, who in an access of jealousy ate the feathers off his hat; Clermant d'Amboise, who caresses her "only in her petticoat at the door of her bedroom," while the King of Navarre, of an evening, was gaming or promenading with his officers in the great hall; the "old ruffian" (*vieux ruffien*) of a Pibrac "who had been appointed love's chancellor;" and finally, the Seigneur Harlay de Champvalon, who had himself carried to the Louvre in a wooden box in order to be able to enter his mistress' closet at night.

We have made haste to arrive at the scandal which accompanied the departure of the Queen of Navarre, when she quitted Paris and the court, at the order of the King her brother, to re-

turn to Gascony, to the side of her husband. Henri III. was very irritated against her, for the liaison of the Princess with Champvalon had borne its fruits and a child who, it was said, had resulted from this liaison, had disappeared immediately after its birth. Champvalon was prudently retired to Germany, when the pregnancy of Marguerite began to be suspected. It was reported that the adulterous infant had been smothered, cut into bits and hurled into a privy; but it was learned later that he had been reared under the name of Louis de Vaux by the concierge of the Hôtel de Navarre, and that he was looked upon as being the son of a court-perfumer. However this may be, Henri III., having commanded his sister to depart, the latter regretfully obeyed and entered upon the journey on Monday, the 23d of August, 1583, with certain persons of her household. She arrived by evening at Palaiseau, to sleep there; but the King had caused her to be followed by sixty archers of his guard, and there captured. The Sieur de l'Archant, executing secret orders, "came to seek her even in her bed," says Pierre de l'Estoile, "and to take prisoners the lady of Duras and the damoiselle of Béthune, who were accused of incontinence and abortions." The Seigneur of Lodon, gentleman of the Queen of Navarre, was arrested as well as the squire, the secretary, the physician and other officers of this Princess; they were led to Montargis, where the King himself interrogated them "on the deportment of the said Queen, his sister, also upon the child which it was rumored she had had since her coming to the court." But this interrogatory and the inquiry which was the result of it brought nothing to light, and all those who were arrested were given their liberty. Marguerite was then free to continue her journey to Nerac, where her husband was. The King of Navarre did not care to take her again, on account of the scandal accompanying the whole affair. There were no longer any relations between the Queen and her husband, who lived together under the same roof as though they were already separated by a divorce. Henri III. endeavored to intervene, in order to affect at least an apparent

reconciliation. In one of his letters to his brother-in-law he remarks to him maliciously: "You know how kings are subject to being deceived by false rumors, and that the most virtuous princesses are not exempt from calumny; even as regards the late Queen, your mother, you know how much talk, and always bad talk, there was about her." The King of Navarre burst out laughing, and addressing himself to M. de Bellièvre, who had brought him this fine letter: "The King," he said, "does me too much honor by all these letters: in the first, he calls me a cuckold (*cocu*), and in the latter 'son of a whore'* (*filz de putain*). I thank him for it!"

The pair did not live in any better accord, although the King of Navarre, for political reasons, made a pretense of having forgotten his grief: "He had taken back his wife in a manner of acquittal," says De l'Estoile, "and for the command which His Majesty had laid upon him; it was never possible to persuade him to sleep with her, even for one night, and to caress her with fine words and a good face, at which the mother (Catherine de Medici) and the daughter were greatly enraged." De l'Estoile has effaced this passage in a later edition of his *Registre-Journal*, being content to leave there, under date of February, 1585, a phrase stating that Queen Marguerite was "very discontent with her husband, who neglected her, not having slept with her since the news of the affront which the King her brother had offered her in August, 1583." During this interval of time, passed at the court of Nerac, the Queen, who had appeared to desire to mend her ways, led a life that was more honorable; "living with the shame of her sins," says the *Divorce Satyrique*; but finally, she grew tired of this enforced continence, and "let herself be carried away by the flesh and her own boundless sensuality." She abandoned the dwelling of the King, her husband, where she had been closely watched and guarded, by order of her brother, Henri III., and retired to the city of Agen, "there to set up her commerce, and, with more liberty of conscience to

*Our "son of a b——."

continue her orduries." She did not remain there long; the inhabitants of the city, which belonged to the Catholic party, had no sooner learned that the Queen of Navarre had arrived within their walls, than they rose up to oblige her to leave. She then fled in haste: "barely could there be found the crupper of a horse to bear her, nor horses to rent or post horses for the half of her maids, of whom a number followed her, some without cloaks, some without aprons, and some without either, with a disarray so pitiable that they rather resembled the lasses of the German foot soldiers (*lansquenetz*) upon breaking of camp than they did maids of a good house; accompanied by certain nobility poorly harnessed, who, half without boots and half on foot, led her, under the guard of Lignerac, to the mountains of Auvergne in Carlat." Henri III., having learned of the flight of his sister, was very irritated at it and remarked in a loud voice to his courtiers: "The cadets of Gascony are not able to defile the Queen of Navarre enough; she has left them to seek the muleteers and braziers of Auvergne!"

The poor Marguerite, in the passing from Agen to Carlat, took the crupper behind a gentleman (see the *Scaligerana*, under the word NAVARRE). "She rubbed all the skin off her rump, of which she was ill for a month, and had the fever." The physician who treated her "had the stirrups (i. e., was given a thrashing) for having talked too much," according to the *Dictionnaire Général et Curieux* of César de Rochefort (page 415, column 1). Which authorizes us to suppose that this "*ecorchure*" of the Queen's rump had a suspicious origin. The Queen of Navarre, if we are to believe the *Divorce Satyrique*, suffered greatly from want in the Château de Carlat, "where she was for long, not only without dais or litter, but also without chemises for every day." She consoled herself by yielding to every whim of temperament in this château, "which was more like a den of thieves than the dwelling of a Princess, maid, wife, and sister of the King." She could not renew as often as she liked, the personnel of her galantries, and she found herself circumscribed in her choice of

lovers. In the absence of the Seigneur of Duras, "whom she had sent to the King of Spain in quest of money," she cast eyes successively on Choisin, one of the musicians of her suite, then on her cook, then on Saint-Vincent, her maître d'hôtel, then on Aubiac, "the best groomed of her domestics, whom she brought from the stables to the bedrooms." This Aubiac had been greatly taken with her upon seeing her for the first time seven or eight years before. "I would have slept with her then," he exclaimed loudly, looking upon her with eyes inflamed with love, "even under pain of being hanged a short while afterwards!" In speaking thus, he was casting his own horoscope; for, after having been the favorite of this Princess (although he was but a "churlish squire, red haired and more speckled than a trout, with a nose of scarlet tint, a most unpromising one for any mirror, but still was one day found in the bed with a daughter of France, as he was at Carlat by Madame de Marze, who, from rising too early, made this fine discovery),—after being the favorite of the Princess, he was made a prisoner in the Château of Ivry, where the latter had taken refuge upon her flight from Carlat. The King of France, irritated against his sister, had ordered the Marquis of Canillac to take charge of her, for Marguerite, a number of years since had embraced the League, in order to avenge herself at once on her brother and her husband. The Queen was then removed to the Château of Usson, in Auvergne, where the Marquis of Canillac was charged with keeping her a prisoner, while her latest lover, the unfortunate Aubiac, was led away to Aigueperse, there to be judged. He was condemned, as a Leaguer, to be hanged, and he went to his fate kissing a "sleeve of blue satin which was all that remained to him of the benefits of his lady." But already Marguerite had given him a successor, for the Marquis of Canillac had permitted himself to be seduced by his prisoner. He became, however unprepossessing he may have been, "as well gotten up and pretty as a young village swain." The Queen did not love him, but she pretended to love him, and he, jealous of all rivals whom he might suspect,

neglected the service of the King for that of his enchantress. The latter managed so well her ruses and her artifices, that she soon conceived a pretext to disembarass herself of her amorous jailor, seizing the château from his hands while he was absent. Upon his return, the Marquis of Canillac found the gates closed, and Marguerite informed him that she had no further need of a governor. He left Usson with a sigh and became a laughing stock at the court of Henri III., who, however, pardoned him for having so poorly fulfilled his mission, in view of the discomfiture which he had undergone. The only vengeance the King took was to remark to Canillac: "Why did you not ask permission of Queen Margot to become her perfumer?"

The fortress of Usson, built upon a point of rock, was inexpugnable. Henri IV. had no idea of beseiging his wife; he was satisfied with the fact that she was a captive, although a sovereign within this species of prison. She remained for more than twenty years in this mysterious asylum of debaucheries, one of the panegyrists of this princess, Père Hilarion de Coste, in his *Éloges des Dames Illustres*, making no scruple to say, in rhetorical style, that "this redoubtable château of Auvergne was a Tabor for her devotion, a Lebanon for her solitude, an Olympus for her exercises, a Parnassus for her muses, and a Caucasus for her afflictions." Bayle remarks, with reason, that the sojourn of the Queen of Navarre at Usson might more justly have been compared to the retreat of Tiberius on the island of Capri. It is certain, moreover, that the voluptuous siren of Usson was clever enough to hide so well from profane eyes the immodest mysteries which took place in the interior of her château, where no strange foot ever entered, that the eyes and ears of the public were able to hear or see nothing. All that took place behind those thick walls escaped the curiosity and the censure of those without. Those in the neighborhood did not even know the manner of life which was led in this inaccessible retreat, all echoes of which were silent as soon as Marguerite had quitted the place. Following is the manner in which a grave and honorable man,

Jean Darnalt, procurator of the King at the seat of Agen, deluded himself as to the manners and habits of the lady of the place: "It is a thing very true," he says, in his *Antiquitez d'Agen* (which were printed in Paris in 1606, following his *Remonstrance au Harangue Solennelle Faite aux Ouvertures des Plaidoyers, d'après Saint Luc, en la Senechaussée d'Agen*), "it is very true that Her Majesty very closely observed there a laudable custom. After having recreated herself moderately in the exercises of the Muses, she would remain most of the time retired in her chapel, making prayers to God, full of ardor, communicating once or twice a week." The worthy magistrate, who certainly possessed a strong faith in his paronymph, would not have dared write, or above all publish anything, if he had suspected the truth; for the praises which he addresses the Queen strongly resemble pleasantries, and Marguerite must have had a good laugh with her mignons when Darnalt read to her very seriously this morsel of eloquence: "Phoenix, who are reborn daily from your own ashes, burning and consuming yourself in divine love . . . , you live another life than is lived in the world! . . . holy hermitage, monastery devout, where Her Majesty gives all her study to meditation, tending only to the end of ends, to the one sovereign end; rock which is a witness of voluntary solitude, very praiseworthy and religious, on the part of this Princess, for it seems, from the sweet music and the harmonious songs of the most beautiful voice in France, that paradise can be nowhere else than where Her Majesty tastes the contentment and repose of mind which the souls of the blessed know in the other world!"

We do not possess, unfortunately, the counter part of this incredible panegyric; there are in the *Divorce Satyrique*, but a few unimportant lines concerning the sojourn of Marguerite at Usson. When she had expelled the Marquis of Canillac from this château, "she resolved to obey nothing any more save her own will," says Henri IV in the *Divorce Satyrique*, "and to set up on this rock the empire of her delights, where, shut in by

three walls and with all the great gates barred, as God and all France knows, she played and brought into use many fine sports. The *Nanna* of Aretino and his *Sainte* are nothing by comparison." But after this beginning, which promises singular revelations, the statement of the King gives us scarcely any information at all concerning those fine sports which so long occupied the lady of Usson, and which replaced for her the dreams of ambition and the pleasures of pride. We may conclude, nevertheless, with certainty, from the very silence which history has preserved regarding the details of this long retreat, that the illustrious recluse lived in the midst of the most monstrous dissoluteness: "It is true," says her royal spouse on this subject, "that in place of the gallants who had sweetened her past life, she was there reduced, for lack of better, to her domestics, secretaries, choristers and waifs of nobility, whom, by force of gifts, she attracted to her, whose race and names, unknown to her very neighbors, are unworthy of my memory." Henri IV. cites but one, who gives the measure of all the others, and one who had a more brilliant reign than the others on account of the criminal love which he had been able to inspire in his mistress: "It is he who, she says, changes body, voice, face and skin, as it seems to her, and who enters closed doors where it pleases him; it was for him that she had the beds of her ladies of Usson made so high that one might see under them without bending, in order not to have to wear the skin off her shoulders and buttocks, as she had been wont, by going down on all fours to look for him; it was for him that she was frequently to be seen groping the tapestries, thinking there to find him, and very often, in looking for him with too great an affection, she marked her face against the doors and walls; it was for him that you have heard our fine voices of the court singing these verses, made by herself:

*A ces bois, ces prez et ces antres,
 Offrons les vœux, les pleurs, les sons,
 La plume, les vœux, les chansons
 D'un poëte, d'un amant, d'en chantré."**

It was a chorister, as a matter of fact, named Pomony or Comines, son of a coppersmith of Auvergne, who had nothing remarkable about him except his "ugliness" and his fine voice; he was at first a choir boy in the village church before being received into the Queen's chapel, Her Majesty cleaning him up a bit in order to make him her secretary and favorite. She was taken with him to the point of madness; and attributed to a magic charm her violent passion, which sometimes took on the form of a furious dementia. Henri IV. remarked that he sometimes could not keep from laughing at the "extravagant jealousies and strong passions of her amours, which frequently transported her to a state where she contemned what she saw and believed she saw what was not, at which times, furious and warm, she would seek her ruffians in all the most isolated parts of her house, although she could not but know that they were in another part, and upon beholding them, she would be persuaded that others under their image were seeking to deceive and do her wrong."

It was this which led to the belief that the Queen, in her amorous transports, was the slave of a sorcerer, who stifled in her the sentiment of modesty; it was less the follies in which she indulged than the strange amulets which she always wore upon her person, that led to this belief. There was a story that she kept in golden boxes the hearts of her dead lovers, as relics of her amours, and this rumor was in a manner confirmed by the quantity of *cassolettes* and jewels in the form of hearts which she scattered in her pockets or wore attached to her girdle. These undoubtedly were but perfumes in boxes of goldsmith work.

*In these woods, these fields and dells
 Offer our vows, our tears, day-long,
 Poet's pen and lover's song,
 Weave they here their magic spells.

And yet, while she resided at Usson, she ordinarily wore suspended from her neck, between her chemise and the flesh, a purse of blue silk "in which *her most privy friends* had discovered a silver box, the engraved superficies of which naïvely contained (among various other and unknown characters) a portrait on one side and her coppersmith on the other." We are authorized to suppose that this silver box was not a talisman of sorcery, but rather a talisman of love; we are also inclined to identify this talisman with that which Brantôme, in his *Dames Galantes*, has a lady of the court, whom he does not name, wear: "Her husband being dead, she cut off his parts from the front and the middle, so loved by her of yore, and embalmed them, odoriferizing them with perfumes and with powders of musk, very odoriferous, and afterwards she enclosed them in a box of gilded silver, which she guarded and preserved as a thing very precious." According to tradition, the truth is, Marguerite of Valois not only had herself cut off the head of her dear La Mole, whom she had been unable to save from his fate, but she had, with her own hands, mutilated the cadaver, which had been divided into four quarters and placed upon pikes on the four corners of the Place de Grève; the head was interred at night, by the pious hands of this desolated sweetheart, in the chapel of Saint-Martin; the heart and other debris, stolen from the body of the victim, were embalmed and placed in boxes of gold and silver, which the Queen wore in the guise of jewels and reliquaries, throughout the course of all her following amours, which but served, as she said, to revive the memory of the former one. "She wore," relates Tallemant des Réaux, who was in a position to know all, "a great farthingale which had little pockets all about it, in which she placed the box in which was the heart of one of her dead lovers; for she was careful, as soon as they had died, to have the heart embalmed. This farthingale hung every night from a steelyard, which closed with padlocks, behind the back of her bed." (See the *Historiettes* of Tallemant des Réaux, second edition of M. de Monmerqué, Volume I., page 163.)

The historian Dupleix, whom Marguerite had attached to her house in the quality of *maître des requêtes*, “an honest appointment,” as he himself says, did not think it necessary to throw a cloak over the misdemeanors of this Princess, when he came to speak of her in the *History of Henri IV*; nevertheless, he clad with a discreet veil the picture of Prostitution which he had had under his eyes for twenty years: “all the world publishing her as a goddess,” he says in the *Histoire de Louis XIII.* (page 53), “she imagined that she was one, and for that reason took pleasure all her life in being named Venus Uranios, that is to say, *heavenly*, not so much to show that she shared the goddess’ divinity, as to distinguish her love from that of the vulgar, for she had another method of loving than that of other women, pretending especially that it was more to be practiced by the mind than by the body, and this word was frequently in her mouth: ‘would you cease loving? possess the thing you love!’* I could make a romance more excellent and more admirable than has ever been composed in preceding centuries, but I have more serious occupations.”

Dupleix justifies himself for having revealed, or rather for having permitted to be divined, the incontinence of the Queen, by declaring that he was not writing panegyrics for princes and princesses, but “a true history, which should express their virtues and not suppress their vices, to the end that their successors, fearing a similar brand upon their memory, might imitate their praiseworthy actions and flee their evil ones.” But he was generally blamed, and Bassompierre made himself the trumpet of this blame in his *Remarques* on the work of Dupleix, where he indulges in an interpolation on this subject in accents of contempt and indignation. “Infamous viper, who by your calumny tear the entrails of the one who has given you life! Vermin, who eat the very flesh which has procreated you! . . . What shame do you do to France in publishing to all the world and leaving to posterity accounts so infamous of one of the noblest Princesses

*Cf. Oscar Wilde and others. The idea has long since become a commonplace.

of the blood royal, which may be false, or, if not, were known to but a few persons?"

From this it may be seen, Bassompierre himself, in thus taking up in so lively a fashion the defense of Marguerite, avows that those calumnies with which he reproaches Dupleix may have been merely slanders and indiscretions; but Dupleix had merely repeated, with an extreme reserve, what was said everywhere, in the courts and among the people, since the Queen of Navarre had quitted her enchanted château of Usson, in 1605, to return to Paris to take up her residence there; her hysterical or hypochondriac state had become such that the scandals thereby engendered were the talk and the astonishment of all France. "This weakness," says Dupleix, "appeared at the beginning only in certain details known to her domestics; but after her last trip to the court, they were but only too well divulged, she herself making them known to all the world."

Whatever may have been the notoriety accompanying the misdemeanors of Queen Marguerite, Brantôme, who had also been one of her domestics, and who preserved for her as much respect as admiration, does not permit himself in the manner of Dupleix, to betray the secrets surrounding the private conduct of this Princess. If he relates in his *Dames Galantes*, possibly with the connivance of Marguerite, a number of facts sufficiently equivocal concerning her, and which he had received directly and in confidence from the Venus Uranios, he is very careful not to name her, and he frequently takes the precaution to sidetrack the reader by modifying various details of his narrative. The notice which he devotes to Marguerite in the *Vies des Femmes Illustres* is a resplendent panegyric, in which the author does not admit the shadow of gallantry, as though his object were to oppose this brilliant eulogy to the *Divorce Satyrique*, which was current at court about that time. Thus, Brantôme avoids refuting one by one the accusations which the author of the *Divorce Satyrique* had accumulated in this factum against the manners of Marguerite; he attacks not only this difficult and delicate

thesis, but he hurls himself unreservedly into laudatory generalities, and he sets himself almost exclusively to the task of placing in relief those seductive charms which had always been characteristic of the Queen: "There," he says, "is a Princess who, in everything, exceeds the commonplaces of all others in the world!" Brantôme is pleased to depict that marvelous beauty, that incomparable grace, that exquisite taste in the toilet, that wealth of figure, that nobleness of mien and all the other external perfections which drew from one honest gentleman, a newcomer at the court, the remark that: "I am not astonished if you others, messieurs, are so fond of yourselves here at court; for, when you have no other pleasure every day except to see that beautiful Princess, you have as much as if you were in an earthly Paradise." The author of the *Divorce Satyrique*, among the cruel epigrams which he addresses to the already repudiated spouse of Henri IV., indulged, perhaps, in no remarks more offensive to the *amour-propre* of woman, than in two or three passages, in which he does not hesitate to attack a beauty which age had not spared. It is those insulting passages which Brantôme chiefly endeavored to combat and to efface, as they alone concerned the honor of Marguerite. The pamphleteer had reproached the Queen with rouging and powdering herself beyond measure, in order to hide her wrinkles. Brantôme adroitly recalls a comparison which he had made of this Queen to the beautiful Aurora, "when she is born, before the day, with her beautiful white face and surrounded by vermilion and incarnate color." The pamphleteer indulged in very gross jocosities relative to the indecent exhibition which she made of her throat: Brantôme, without alluding to a reproach which fell less upon the Queen than upon the fashions of her times, approves and glorifies those nudities which he did not look upon with the same eye as Henri IV: "Her beautiful accoutrements and fine adornments," he says, "never dared to undertake the task of covering her beautiful throat nor her fine breast, fearing to wrong the sight of the world by depriving

it of so fine an object; for never had there been seen one so fine nor so full of charm, so full nor so plump, which she showed so fully and so without concealment that the majority of courtiers died at the sight, to say nothing of the ladies, some of whom I have seen (among them her most privy friends) kiss them, with her permission, with a great ravishment." Brantôme, old and infirm at that time, had remained faithful to the service of his ancient mistress, who in a letter written to him from Usson, transmits to him in these terms, the expressions of an unalterable affection: "I know that, like me, you have chosen the tranquil life, which I esteem a happy one for the one who can keep it, as God has given me the grace to do for five years past, having lodged me in an ark of salvation where the storms of trouble, *Dieu mercy!* cannot come at me; but if there remain any means by which I may serve my friends, and you, in particular, you shall find me entirely disposed and of good will."

Queen Marguerite, satisfied with the "tranquil life" which she was leading in her "ark of safety," would hardly have protested against the breaking off of her marriage with the King, if she had not feared to see the crown of France pass to the head of Gabrielle d'Estrées, whom she detested, not as a rival worthy of herself, but as an enemy fatal to royalty; she refused thus to be an accomplice in the intentions and circumventions of Henri IV., who had formulated a request for divorce before the court of Rome; but Gabrielle, dying suddenly, undoubtedly of poison, on the 10th of April, 1599, Marguerite at once consented to a divorce. "I have indulged in procrastinations," she wrote to Sully, on the 29th of July; "you know the reason as well as any other, how I did not wish to see in my place such a baggage, whom I esteem unworthy of possessing it." She herself presented to Pope Clement VIII. a request conformable to that of the King, and she showed no rancor to Henri IV. for the discourteous means he had employed to obtain a divorce in spite of her. She pardoned the outrages contained in the *Divorce Satyrique* and those of the interrogatory which the Pope's commissioners had forced

her to undergo. She smiled with all her heart when she learned that her husband had replied to the Cardinal de Joyeuse, when His Eminence had demanded if they had ever had "intercourse together" (*communication ensemble*): "We were both very young on the day of our wedding, and each of us was so lecherous that it was impossible for us to refrain." She had never loved Henri IV., whom she accused of smelling under the armpits (*gousset*) and of having malodorous feet. The King, on the other hand, was so full of the memories which she had left him that he exclaimed, upon learning that she had given her full consent to a divorce: "Ah! the poor woman, she knows well enough that I have always loved and honored her, though she did not me, and that it was her bad deportment which caused our separation, so long ago, one from another!" (See the *Mem. et Anecd. des Reines et Régents de France*, by Dreux du Radier, Volume V.) Marguerite pretended that the good of France had determined her to break a union which could not assure an heir to the crown and she was the first to applaud the marriage of the King to Maria de' Medici.

She was still, at this period, under the spell of a new love, which she had formed following the absence of Pominy. It may be presumed that she herself had hastened the departure of this Pominy, for whom she no longer cared, but who came back later to claim his rights with so much brutality that she was obliged to chastise him, remarking that the wicked fellow was ruining all her servants. Pominy's first successor was a little "valet of Provence," named Julien Date, whom she had made a noble "with six ells of cloth," under the name of Saint-Julien. She had left him at Usson, when she decided to repair to court after twenty-four years of voluntary exile. It was in the month of August, 1605, that she suddenly arrived at Paris and took up her quarters at the Hôtel de Sens, near the Arsenal. The day following her arrival, these four verses were found written up over the door of this hôtel, which belonged to the Archbishop of Sens:

*Comme roine tu devrois estre
 En ta royale maison;
 Comme putain, c'est bien raison
 Que tu sois au logis d'un prestre.**

"It was thus," according to the *Divorce satyrique*, that "a *fourrier*, well instructed, marked her hostelry." But she lodged there only a few days, when, to silence all the rumors which her sudden return had given rise to, by awakening, as Pierre de l'Estoile says, the "curious minds," she went to pass six weeks at the Château de Madrid, in the Bois de Boulogne. Henri IV had seen her once more with pleasure, and they were so thoroughly reconciled that "the King had requested of her two things; first, that, in order better to preserve her health, she would discontinue her custom of turning night into day and day into night; the other that she would restrain her liberalities and become a better husbandwoman." Henri IV. frequently gave her marks of his affection and interest. He visited her from time to time and amused himself by conversing freely with her; but when he returned to the Louvre, it was his custom to remark, jokingly, "that he had come back from the *bordeau*." (*Mém et Journaux* of Pierre de l'Estoile, under the reign of Henri IV., edition of MM. Champollion, page 425.) Queen Marguerite, in taking up her residence at Paris, probably had conceived the plan of changing her life and renouncing gallantry; "but," says the impitiable author of the *Divorce Satyrique*, "not being able to do without a male any longer, lamenting the time lost and not desiring to remain idle," she sent to Usson for this Date or Saint-Julien, "so many times sought after during her periods of pleasure." Saint-Julien at once set forth and came to resume the post of Mignon which he had formerly occupied at the Queen's side. The latter, whose passion for this young man was carried to the point of mad-

*As a queen you ought to be
 Your own house within;
 As a whore it is no sin
 To be in a friary.

ness, gave Pominy his congé and held at a distance all those of her officers with whom she had contracted more or less intimate relations. One of these named Vermond, aged eighteen years, conceived such a jealousy against the favorite that he slew him with a pistol bullet at the door of the Queen's carriage. The assassin we arrested; he was searched, and there were found, according to the *Journal* of De l'Estoile, "three ciphers upon him: one for life, another for love and the other for silver." He was tried upon the spot, for the Queen had sworn "not to eat or drink until justice had been done him." When he was led to the bloody body of his victim, Marguerite, all in tears was present by her own desire. "Ah! How happy I am that he is dead!" he cried, in looking at the corpse; "if he were not, I would kill him now!"—"Kill him! kill him! the wicked fellow!" interrupted the desolated Queen. "Hold him! hold him! here are my garters: strangle him!" The following day, Vermond, condemned to be beheaded in front of the Hôtel de Sens, walked gaily to the scene of punishment, remarking that he did not mind dying, since his rival was dead.

Immediately after this execution, Queen Marguerite abandoned the Hôtel de Sens, which reminded her too much of her lost mignon. She purchased in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, a great hotel, situated on the banks of the river, near the Tower of Nesle and at the entrance of the Pre-aux-Clercs. She rebuilt the place at great expense and had the apartments painted and decorated, the gardens designed and set out in such a manner as to create an *Ile de Cythère*, where Venus Uranios might establish her temple and her cult. There were to be seen here nothing but emblems and devices of love, ciphers, arms and portraits of her new and ancient lover; for, by a singular faculty of her licentious imagination, she was enabled so well to mingle memory with material fact that she might incessantly call to the aid of her pleasures the emotions and joys of another day; as though all the gallants she had had in the course of her life were there and able to satisfy her, without being able to content her ever. Thus, Julien Date still preserved his rights and privileges, even though he were dead, and

even though Bajaumont had taken his active place. Following is the manner in which the *Divorce Satyrique* depicts for us the successor of Date: "This Baujemont (or rather, Bajaumont, of the house of Duras), having become the new idol in the temple of this defamed creature, the golden calf of her sacrifices and the most perfect dunce who ever came to her court, had been introduced by Madame d'Anglure, instructed by Madame Roland, civilized by Lemayne (or Le Moine), and thereafter cured of two buboes by Penna, the physician, and thereafter slapped by Delin (or de Loue), being now in possession of that pernicious fortune without which poverty would now be saffroning the rest of his body like his beard." She loved Bajaumont, her *bec jaune*, as she had loved Date, Pominy, Aubiac and La Mole. But she was to lose him also, and was soon consoled in the same fashion. The Sire de Loue took the sword against the favorite and endeavored to slay him in church, but being prevented, was sent a prisoner to the For-l'Évêque and had to undergo a trial in which the Queen took the part of civil pleader. But Bajaumont was so frightened that he fell ill and contracted a jaundice from which he never completely recovered. Marguerite did not quit the bedside of her *bec jaune*; the King came there to interview her, and he found her in so sorry a plight, that, upon leaving the chamber, he remarked to the Queen's maids "that they should all pray God for the convalescence of the said Bajaumont, for if he should happen to die, *ventre-saint gris!*" cried the King with gaiety, "it would cost me plenty since I should have to buy a brand new house in place of this one, where she would not want to live any more." (*Journ. de Henri IV* by Pierre de l'Etoile.) Bajaumont did not die, and Marguerite's tenderness for him only became the madder and the more eccentric; since she had had for long two "*loups*" (malign ulcers) on her legs, she demanded that Bajaumont put two cauteries on his arms, in order that they might have nothing with which to reproach each other!

"Who then will write her heroic acts," inquires the author of the *Divorce Satyrique* "for they shall not lack chroniclers, who

will admire her inclination to whorishness and who will approve her deeds so that they may be registered in the brothel?" However, the debauched life which Queen Marguerite led at her hôtel, has not been described in the contemporary memoirs, at least not unless we seek an allegoric picture in some romance like the *Astrée*. We merely know that the Queen, who almost never left her *pourpris amoureux*, occupied herself with devotion as much as with gallantry. She had caused to be built the convent of the Augustinians at her door, so that she might have, as she remarked, the monks under her hand. She impressed into her service forty English, Scotch or Irish priests, at a rate of forty crowns a year. She distributed every year considerable gifts to different religious communities. She scattered alms with a mad prodigality, for which revenues ten times as large as hers would not have been sufficient. The avowed object of these pious liberalities was to redeem all the sins which she might commit with her gallants and her mignons, notably with one of the latter, who was a musician named Villars, and who was called "the king Margot." (See the *Histor. of Tallemant des Réaux*.) Nevertheless, Dupleix affirms that "in the amours of Marguerite, there was more art and appearance than there was substance; for she enjoyed marvelously playing with love, entertaining herself at it with decency and discretion, and with seeing and hearing men who professed a passion for her; this same she did ordinarily as a manner of divertisement, according to the custom of the court, where one who did not know how to cajole the women barely passed for a clever man and where a woman who did not know how to win the hearts of men was not looked upon as a clever woman." It might be said that the Queen, notwithstanding her pious works, or the fact that, as P. Hilarion de Cosse tells us, she frequently employed notable sums "in the marrying off of poor girls"—despite all this, it might be said that Her Majesty kept a refined school of Prostitution in her delightful hôtel in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where her little court, composed of poets, philosophers, musicians, debauched gentlemen and abandoned ladies, lived like her in the

midst of great disorder and found a glory in imitating her example and following the lessons she taught. Henri IV., at the end of the *Divorce Satyrique*, wishes her "some amendment" and prays to God "to impart to her some drop of repentance, for, without it, the water of wax and flesh which she mixes as an alembic cannot hide her imperfections, the oil of jasmin with which she every night anoints her body cannot slay the stinking odor of her reputation, nor can the erysipelas which frequently causes her members to peel change and despoil her old and evil skin."

Henri IV., it must be confessed, did not yield to his former wife in the matter of libertinism, nor to anyone of his age, and whatever otherwise may have been the qualities of this Prince, one of the best Kings who had governed France, we are still forced to admit that the story of his amours and his excesses is an integral part of the history of Prostitution in the sixteenth century. "It might be said," remarks Bayle, in his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*, "that if his love for women had permitted him to display all his fine qualities in all their force, he would have surpassed all those heroes whom we most admire. If, the first time he had debauched his daughter, or his neighbor's wife, he had been punished in the same manner as Pierre Abélard, he would have become capable of conquering all Europe." Without admitting, with Bayle, that the unbridled passion of Henri IV. for women causes us to regret for his honor's sake, that he was not deprived of the means of satisfying it, we still must recognize the fact that this great King surpassed all his predecessors in carnal appetites and in incontinence; but we believe that this furious *abatteur de bois*, as he described himself, would not have become, in ceasing to be a man, a more intrepid warrior, nor a more consummate politician. His vices, like his good qualities, were inherent in his temperament, and his debauched manners, which did not differ from those of his contemporaries, except in an excess of petulance and of ardor, did not exert an unfortunate influence over the good movements of his heart, or the fine manifestations of his character. In an admirable letter to Sully (see the *Oeconomies Royales*,

folio edition, Volume III., pages 137 and 138), he defends himself against the charge of loving too much "ladies and the delights of love." "The Scriptures do not absolutely forbid having any sins or defects, inasmuch as such infirmities are attached to the impetuosity and quickness of human nature, but they do require that we shall not be dominated by them, nor permit them to reign over our wills, which is a thing which I have studied, being able to do no better. And you know, from many things which have passed concerning my mistresses (those passions which all the world regards as the most puissant in my case), whether I have not often maintained your opinions against their fantasies, even to the point of telling them when they became too importunate, that I should prefer to lose ten mistresses like them to losing one servant like you, who are necessary to me in all honorable and useful things." The historians and panegyrists of Henri IV. were not able to accept these excuses, and all agree in blaming, without restriction, the prodigious license of his conduct. "Still less," says Mézeray, "may history excuse his abandonment to women, which was so public and so universal from his youth to the last of his days, that one could hardly give it even the name of love or of gallantry." (*Abrégé Chronol. de l'Hist. de France*, Volume VI., page 392.) The learned and venerable Bishop of Rodez, Hardouin de Péréfixe, who wrote the *Histoire de Henri le Grand* for the education of King Louis XIV., could not refrain from reproaching his hero with the "continual fragility which he had for beautiful women" (*fragilité continuelle qu'il avoit pour les belles femmes*): "Sometimes," he adds, with a candor which approaches indecency, "he had desires which were passing and which attacked him for but a single night; but when he met beauties who struck him to the heart, he loved them to the point of madness, and in these transports, he appeared to be nothing less than Henry the Great."

Agrippa d'Aubigné, who in his *Histoire Universelle depuis 1550 jusqu'en 1601*, does not disdain to relate in detail some of the amorous adventures of the King of Navarre, and reviews, in

the *Confession de Sancy*, the first mistresses of this Prince, obscure ones or of low degree, who enjoyed but an ephemeral reign and who were frequently ill-paid. He commences by recalling the "infamous amours" of Béarnais with Catherine du Luc of Agen, "who afterward died of hunger, she and an infant which she had by the King;" he then goes on to speak of the demoiselle of Montaignu (daughter of Jean de Balzac, superintendent of the household of the Prince of Condé), whom the chevalier of Mont Luc had left to the mercy of the Prince of Navarre through the mediation of a gentleman of Gascony, named Salbeuf, "at which he was put to much pain," for the reason that the poor demoiselle was greatly taken with the chevalier of Mont Luc, whom she had followed all the way to Rome, and for the reason that she felt a profound aversion to the King, "then full of . . . contracted by sleeping with Arnaudine, lass of the huntsman Labrosse." D'Aubigné later names "the little Tignonville, who was impressionable before being married." She was the daughter of the governess of the Princess of Navarre, sister of the young Henry; the latter became foolishly enamoured of her, and his passion only grew with the resistance which it encountered. Sully reports, in his *Oeconomies Royales*, that, about 1576, the Prince went to Bearne, under pretext of seeing a sister, but no one at court was ignorant of the fact that the object of his voyage was to meet with the young Tignonville, "of whom he was then amorous." He wished to employ d'Aubigné to "pimp that pretty creature" (*maquignonner cette belle farouche*); d'Aubigné refused to undertake such a task, and the Prince was forced to look elsewhere to achieve his end. Tignonville was obstinate and would hear nothing, before being provided with a husband, who would take upon his own shoulders the burden of the adventure; the Prince of Navarre finally married her off and obtained the right of prelibation.* The Prince did not blush to descend even to chambermaids and girls of the servants' quarters. He had contracted a venereal malady, in forgetting himself in a stable of Agen, with

*The mediaeval *droit du seigneur*.

a concubine of a palfrey, and barely was he cured when he slipped one night into the chamber of a servant maid whose affections he shared with a valet named Goliath; this *goujat* did not suspect that he had for rival the King his master, and endeavored to kill the latter by hurling a tuck at him at the moment when Henri of Navarre was leaving the bed of this Jourgandine. We can understand how, under such amorous auspices as these, the Prince was shaken in his assault upon the virtue of a demoiselle of Rabours, who did not hesitate to prefer to him the Admiral of Anville, "who loved her more honestly."

D'Aubigné merely cites in summary fashion "the amours with Dayel, the Fosseuse; with Fleurette, daughter of a gardener of Nérac; with Martine, wife of a doctor in attendance on the Princess of Condé; with the wife of Sponde; with Esther Imbert, who died, along with the son which she had by the King, of poverty, as well as the father of Esther, who died of hunger at Saint-Denys, pursuing the fortunes of his daughter. Afterward came the affairs with Maroquin, an old Gascon debauchee, to whom this nickname had been given "because she had a leatherish skin and some sort of syphilis" (see the *Aventures du Baron de Foeneste*, Book II., chapter 18); with an old baker woman of Saint-Jean; with Madame de Petonville; with la Baveresse (the Slobberer), "so named because she sweated so;" with Mademoiselle Duras; with the daughter of a concierge; with Picotin, an ovenkeeper (*pancoussaire*) at Pau; with the Countess of Saint-Mégrin; with the nurse of Câstel-Jaloux, "who wished to give him a slash with a knife, because for a crown which he gave this lady he got back fifteen sols for the maquerele;" and, finally, with the two sisters of l'Espée. The malicious author of the *Confession de Sancy* has no intention here of indicating all the intrigues which were the occupations of Henri IV.'s youth; thus, he does not mention the lady of Narmoutier, who, according to the *Nouveaux Mémoires* of Bassompierre, was not the last on the list; he merely cites a few names and a few facts; he is indignant at having been the witness, if not the accomplice, of excesses which were repulsive to

his Huguenot austerity. Queen Marguerite, in her *Mémoires*, was evidently animated by the intention of justifying her personal conduct, by assailing that of the King, but we do not know the circumstances which led her to pause in the midst of these *Mémoires*, which were to have been her defense, and which were never completed; the parts which have been published present regrettable lacunae, in which we remark the manifest design of effacing, or at least of attenuating, the griefs of the wife toward her husband. These lacunae, therefore, bear upon the most interesting points in the secret history of the King's loves. The Queen's original manuscript must have undergone considerable elisions, leaving gaps which it would be impossible to fill up with the aid of the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, which does not begin till the year 1589. We still shall be able, however, to complete and rectify some of the statements of the *Confession de Sancy* from the *Mémoires* of Marguerite, as we possess them, altered and abbreviated.

Marguerite had not been married two years, when her brother, Henri III. put her "*en mauvais ménage*" with the King of Navarre, while the latter was engaged in a broil with the Duke of Alençon, his brother-in-law, "on the subject of jealousy concerning their common amour with Madame de Sauve (Charlotte de Beaune de Semblançay). Henri of Navarre was madly in love with this lady who "was governed" at that time by the counsels of Le Gaust, "making use of the instructions not less pernicious than those of La Célestine." The two Princes had come "to so great and vehement a jealousy one of another that even when there was a question of M. de Guise, du Guast, de Souvray, and a number of others, all of whom were more in love with her than themselves, they were not concerned." The Queen was not jealous of her husband, "desiring nothing but his content;" one night she perceived that he had lost consciousness, and did all she could to aid him in that "very great weakness, which comes to him, as I believe," she said "from his excesses with women." At this period, they no longer slept in the same bed; and the King, who devoted all his

time "to the sole pleasure of enjoying the presence of his mistress, Madame de Sauve," would not reenter the nuptial chamber until two o'clock in the morning, and would arise at daybreak in order to go and rejoin his mistress. The King of Navarre regretfully obeyed the duties of public policy in leaving the court and his Madame de Sauve, but he soon forgot the enchantress, for, as Marguerite said, "the charms of this Circe soon lost their force by distance." The little court of Navarre became, for two years, a sort of plenary court of gallantry and Prostitution; the Queen mother had come there, accompanied by her daughter, Marguerite, in order to negotiate with a Protestant gentleman, and she remained eighteen months in Guyenne and in Gascony, in maneuvering the "flying squadron" of her maids of honor. In a conference which took place at Nérac between the Huguenot deputies and Catherine de Medici, the latter "thought to enchant them by the charms of the beautiful maids whom she had with her and by the eloquence of Pibrac; Marguerite opposed her with the same artifices, won over the gentlemen from her mother's side through the attractions of her own maids, and so adroitly employed her own charms as to enslave the mind and will of the poor Pibrac." (*Hist. de Henri le Grand* by Hardouin de Péréfixe.) In another conference, which took place at the château de Saint-Brix, near Cognac, the King of Navarre, who had more than once surrendered his arms to the beautiful demoiselles of the Flying Squadron, felt himself more hardened against these ruses of amorous warfare; he was at the moment, sufficiently worried about the state of his health, following an encounter with La Meroquin. Catherine de' Medici, surrounded by the gracious *état-major* of her maids, smilingly demanded of her care-worn and discomfited son-in-law: "What would you?"—"There is nothing there that I care for Madame!" tristfully replied the Prince, regarding all the beauties who were offered him and whom he felt obliged to refuse. (*Dict. Hist. et Crit.* of Bayle, article on HENRI IV.)

The King had been previously "very amorous" of one of these beautiful maids, so well trained, as Hardouin de Péréfixe tells us, by the Queen mother "to amuse the princes and the seigneurs and to discover all their thoughts." This maid was La Dayelle, native of the Isle of Cyprus, who won her dowry by amusing Henri of Navarre, and who afterwards wed Jean d'Hemerits, a Norman gentleman. Dayelle had not occupied the King's attention seriously enough to distract him from his vagabond amours; he also had a "kindly feeling" (*bontés*) in passing for the wife of the scholar, Martinius, professor of Greek and Hebrew, who insisted on believing that his Martine and the King "would not carry things any further than a game," as Colomiez says (in his *Gaule Orientale*, page 93). "After the departure of Dayelle, the King," relates Marguerite, "set about seeking for Rebours, daughter of a president of the Parliament of Paris, who was a malicious girl," and one who had no love for the Queen but who did the latter all the bad offices in her power. This maid, who died a short time afterward at Chenonceaux, where Marguerite went to visit her and forgave her all, had given the King a rival in the hope of making a husband of this lover, who was Geoffrey de Buad, Seigneur de Frontenac. La Rebours was not yet dead when the King "commenced to embark with Fosseuse, who was very beautiful and then quite a child and altogether innocent." Françoise de Montmorency, called La belle Fosseuse, for the reason that her father was Baron of Fosseux, was one of the maids of honor of the Queen mother; but she consented to enter the house of Queen Marguerite, in order to be near the King, whom she loved "extremely," although she had not "permitted him any privileges which decency might not permit;" but Henri was once more jealous of his brother-in-law, the Duke of Alençon, who was courting La Fosseuse at the same time; the latter, "in order to remove his jealousy and let him know that she loved none but him, so abandoned herself to content him in all things that he might want of her that she unfortunately become pregnant." Marguerite lent a hand in concealing this pregnancy, and it was she who took in the infant whom La Fosseuse brought into the

world. This maid promised herself that she would one day supplant the Queen, and marry the father of her son. But the child did not live, and the mother, cast aside like all those who had preceded her, proceeded to wed, at the King's good pleasure, François de Broc, Seigneur de Saint-Mars.

It was Diane, known as Corisande D'Andouins, Viscountess of Louvigny and Lady of Lescur, who took the place of La Fosseuse. Sully, in his *Mémoires*, says, in speaking of the events of the year 1583, that the King of Navarre "was then at the warmest pitch of his amorous passion for the Countess of Guiche." Corisande d'Andouins, married in 1567 to Philibert Grammont, Count of Guiche, had become a widow in 1580 and had not for long resisted the pressing attentions of the King, who had pursued her since she was fifteen years old. Corisande was no longer young, but she was always beautiful. Agrippa d'Aubigné pictures her for us going to mass at Mont-de-Marsan clad in a green robe and followed by a most strange cortège: "I see this woman, who is of good house, turning and moving this Prince as she would; there she is going to mass, on a fête day, accompanied only by an ape, a water spaniel and a buffoon." The passion of the King for this beautiful lady, who was not less than thirty-five or forty years of age, lasted until 1589. He wrote to her from Marens, in 1587: "My soul, keep me in your good graces; believe me that my fidelity is white and stainless. There was never its like; if that gives you any contentment, live happily." It was at this period that he began thinking of divorce in order to marry his mistress, to whom he had given promise of marriage, signed in his own blood; but he was turned aside from his purpose by d'Aubigné, who had the courage to say to him: "I do not propose that you renounce your passion. I myself have been amorous and I know what you are suffering. But make use, Sire, of a motive which should excite you to render yourself worthy of your mistress, who would despise you if you were so to abase yourself as to marry her!" Corisande would have succeeded, perhaps, in overcoming the wise counsels of Agrippa d'Aubigné, if the King had remained

by her side, but the hazards of war led him into Normandy where "he passed by the house of a widowed lady, who kept great state," says the anonymous author of the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*; "she was very beautiful and still young, and she appeared most amiable to the eyes of the King, who ceased loving his absent mistress, who was waiting for him, but who never saw him more."

This widowed lady was Antoinette de Pons, who had been married to Henri de Tilly, Count de la Rocheguyon. She held the fort well and defended her virtue so successfully, that the King even spoke to her of marriage, as he had to the other, but she did not permit herself to be taken in any such trap as this, and the King found himself no further along than he had been in the beginning. He was piqued at this unexpected resistance, but he esteemed her all the more for it, and later the virtuous widow married a second husband, Charles du Plessis, Seigneur de Liancourt. Henri, tired of war and abandoning his gallant pursuits, remarked to the Countess de la Rocheguyon that inasmuch as she was "really lady of honor, she should be one at the hands of the Queen, whom he would place upon the throne by marriage." (See the *Mém. et Anecd. des Reines et Régentes de France*, by Dreux du Radier.) And yet, there is ground for believing, that, notwithstanding her refusals, the lady of honor had had a feeling of love, or something very like it, for her adorer; she manifested a feeling of jealousy with regard to Gabrielle d'Estrées, lady of Liancourt, who had become the King's favorite, for she set as a condition for her marriage to Charles du Plessis, Seigneur of Liancourt, "that she should never have to bear the name of Liancourt, since a whore bore the same name." (See the *Observat. sur le Grand Alcandre* and its key in the *Journal de Henri III*, edited by Lengley-Dufresnoy.) The King silenced her by according her the title of Marchioness of Guercheville. He had loved her truly, but he had not for that reason imposed upon himself a continence which he regarded as futile or ridiculous. He proceeded, therefore, to console himself for the chagrins which the intractable Comtesse de la Rocheguyon had caused

him by frequenting the company of Charlotte des Essarts, Countess of Romorentin, natural daughter of the Baron of Sautour, squire of the King's stables. He had two daughters by her, who were legitimatized. This beauty, not so cruel as the Norman widow, was at the same time the mistress of the Cardinal of Guise (Louis de Lorraine), son of the Grand Duke of Guise, slain at the *états* of Blois; but the King suspected nothing of all this. During the blockade of Paris, in 1590, when he was lodging with his officers in the Abbey of Montmartre, he had occasion to remark a pretty novice, daughter of the Count of Saint-Aignan and of Marie Babou de la Bourdaisière; he had no difficulty in "taming" (*apprivoiser*) her, while devoting himself all the while to the other religious. And when the siege was lifted, he without any formality took with him the young Marie de Beauvilliers, whom he led about for a time from city to city without her quitting the monastic costume; then, this fantasy having passed, he sent back the "nun" to her convent, where she continued to see him from time to time, after he had caused her to be elected Abbess of Montmartre. "The King," it is said, "got along so well with the Abbess, that whenever he spoke of this convent, he referred to it as his monastery, and said that he had been a religious in it." (*Antiq. de Paris*, by Sauval, Volume I., page 154.) Henri IV. was not so well off in the Abbey of Longchamp, where a religious by the name of Catherine de Verdun, whom he recompensed by naming Abbess of Verdun, "had left him," as Bassompierre says, a "*souvenez-vous de moi*," of which he found it hard to rid himself. That was why the abbeys of Longchamp and of Montmartre were called "*le Magasin des engins de l'armée*." (*Confession de Sancy*, Book I, Chapter 8.) He had need at that time of a love more exclusive and more romantic in order to be able to endure with patience the prescriptions of the physicians who had forced upon him a repose necessary to the reestablishment of his health. His ancient debaucheries had borne fruit and it was said that the King, whose blood had been impaired by the plague of Naples, ought to devote himself to his apothecaries rather than to his mis-

tresses. The preachers of the League were not silent in the pulpit on this text. Roze, who preached at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, remarked to his auditors "that while that good Queen, that holy Queen (meaning the Queen of Navarre) is shut up within four walls (at Usson), her husband has a harem of women and of whores, but he has been well paid for it. . . ." The editor of the *Mémoires* of l'Estoile, in which this passage figures, under date of the 12th. of October, 1592, gives us this note: "The end of this phrase which could not be printed exists on page 288 of the manuscript." On the 6th of June, 1593, the friar Feu-Ardent, who was preaching at Saint-Jean, belched forth a thousand injuries against the King, and remarked that one day His Majesty would be struck by a thunderbolt or "would split" (*crèverait*) suddenly: "Already," he added, "the lower part of his belly is all rotten with you know what."

Whether the preachers of the League spoke the truth or not, Henri IV. was, at this period, the lover or at least the *poursuivant*, of Gabrielle d'Estrées. This charming person, one of the daughters of Antoine d'Estrees, Marquis of Coeuvres, and of Françoise Babou de la Bourdaisière inhabited with her sisters the château of her father near Compiègne. Roger de Saint-Lary, Duke of Bellegarde, grand squire and favorite of the King, had secret relations with her which had merely augmented their mutual love. The demoiselle of Coeuvres was admirably beautiful, and her portrait is not less appealing in the following verses of Guillaume de Sable than it is in the *Crayons* of Pierre Dumoustier and of Jean Rabel:

*Mon oeil est tout ravy, quand il voit et contemple
Ses beaux cheveux orins, qui ornent chaque temple,
Son beau et large front et sourcils ébenins,
Son beau nez decorant et l'une et l'autre joue,**

*My eyes are wholly ravished when they view
Those golden locks which her two temples strew,
Her spacious brow and eyebrows ebon-black,
Her pretty nose and each fair blushing cheek,

*Sur lesquelles Amour à toute heure se joue,
Et ses beaux brillants yeux, deux beaux astres benins.*

*Heureux qui peut baiser sa bouche cinabrine,
Ses levres de corail, sa denture yvoirine,
Son beau double menton, l'une des sept beautez,
Le tout accompagné d'un petit ris folastre,
Une gorge de lys sur un beau sein d'albâtre,
Où deux fermes tetins sont assis et plantez!**

Guillaume de Sable, ancient gentleman of the royal hunt, who had served his apprenticeship under Francis I., and who was a fine connoisseur in the matter of the "beauty of ladies" (*beauté de dames*), according to the expression of Brantôme, does not forget, in this portrait, which adorns his *Muse Chasserresse* (Paris, 1611, 12 mo.), the other perfections of Gabrielle: "her white and polished hand, her beautiful, long and pearly fingers," her fine figure, her good grace, and finally,

*Ces petits pieds ouverts, rendant bon tesmoignage
Quel est le demeurant du rare personnage.†*

It is probable that it was Marie de Beauvilliers who first spoke of her cousin of Coeuvres to Henri IV., and who thus inspired in him a violent desire to know her relative. It is said, however, in the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, that Bellegarde, having been so unclever as to praise the singular beauty of this demoiselle in front of the King, her eulogy made such an impression on Henri

*Where little loves all while play hide-and-seek,
With a beauty in her eyes the bright stars lack.

Happy who kisses that mouth of cinnabar,
Those lips of coral, those pearls whiter far
Than ivory, that double chin so neat,
For it 'mid her seven beauties finds a place,
With her light laugh and lily-throat and grace
Of alabaster-bosom with firm teat!

†Those little feet which are a witness fair
To the presence of a personage most rare.

IV. that he experienced a lively curiosity to see the lady and became enamoured of her as soon as he had seen her. He brusquely dismissed the Marchioness of Humières, who had given herself to him a little too eagerly, and he declared himself the servant of Gabrielle. Bellegarde was greatly put out at this. Gabrielle, whose heart was touched for Bellegarde, showed herself at first averse to a new amour, but she possessed sisters who were more experienced and who made her understand that she might find a hundred Bellegardes when she wanted them, whereas she would not be able to find a second King of France. It is permissible to suppose that Bellegarde, who did not look forward to a marriage with the daughter of the Marquis of Couevres, did nothing to destroy the effect of these counsels, even if he did not add similar ones of his own. Gabrielle had, moreover, a maternal aunt, Madame de Sourdis, one of that family of the Babou de la Bourdaisière which gave birth to so many women of joy, as Sully says. This aunt was a worthy sister of Madame d'Éstrées, who was pointed out by her husband to the "familiar" of the house with the remark: "Do you see that woman? She is setting up a den of whores (*clapier de putains*) in my house!" (*Observat. sur le Grand Alcandre*, in the *Journ. de Henri III.*, edition of Lenglet-Dufresnoy). Madame de Sourdis, acting in concert with her lover, the Chancellor Huraut de Cheverny, so cleverly disposed her mother to listen to the proposition of the King that Bellegarde was discarded and Gabrielle came to accept the role of favorite. Henri IV. was struck with her in so lively a fashion, that, not being able to support the torment of her absence, he one day quitted his army, clad as a peasant, traversed Picardy alone at the risk of falling into the hands of the Leaguers, and appeared before Gabrielle, still in disguise, a bundle of straw on his head and a cudgel in his hand. The letters which he addressed every day to his mistress, amid the episodes of an adventurous warfare, are so filled with passion and a delicate tenderness that they demand grace for the misdemeanors of the two lovers. But these touching letters merely served to set in relief the scandalous con-

duct of the King, who, wholly enamoured as he was of Gabrielle, continued to run from mistress to mistress.

Gabrielle, however, was *enciente*, and there was needed a husband to cover the reputation which Bellegarde and the King had endangered. Although the King "had not had the gloves," as one still said in the time of Tallemant des Réaux, he took upon himself the task of picking out a husband, and found a Picardian gentleman, Nicolas d'Amerval, Seigneur de Liancourt, who consented to espouse the lady. Gabrielle had made the King swear that, on the day of the wedding, he would come to relieve her of the conjugal yoke. The marriage took place; but an unforeseen obstacle prevented Henri IV. from coming, as he had promised, and the bridegroom had time to claim his rights. "She did not wish to sleep with him at all," it is said in the *Amours du Grand Alexandre*, "so that her husband, feeling he would have more authority at home than in the city where he had been married, and where Gabrielle's father was governor, took her away; but she saw to it that she was so well accompanied by ladies and relatives who had been invited to her wedding, that he did not dare do what was pleasing to him." The following day, the King arrived and delivered the bride; a short time afterward she gave birth to a son whom the King refrained from naming *Alexandre*, from fear, as Tallemant des Réaux says, "that he would be called *Alexandre le Grand*; for M. de Bellegarde was called *Monsieur le Grand*; and apparently, he had been the first comer." Nevertheless, Henri IV. legitimatized César de Vendôme on the very day (January 7, 1595) that the marriage of Gabrielle d'Estrées to the Seigneur of Liancourt was broken off and declared null by the official of Amiens. Gabrielle, who had borne at first the title of *Marquise de Monceaux*, later received that of *Duchesse de Beaufort*. The King, who in his letters called her "my dear heart" (*mon cher coeur*) or "my dear love" (*mes chères amours*) now called her publicly "my beautiful angel" (*mon bel ange*), which gave rise to the following quatrain:

*N'est-ce pas une chose estrange
De voir un grand roy serviteur,
Les femmes vivre sans honneur,
Et d'une putain faire un ange!**

There was nothing irregular in the conduct of the Duchess of Beaufort; although her manners were greatly decried among the people, who had nicknamed her "the King's whore" (*la putain du roi*), a term which was applied to her in the pulpit by the preachers of the League, notably Guarinus, it is a bit difficult to take literally all the accusations which are accumulated against Gabrielle in the *Nouveaux Mémoires* of Bassompierre, published for the first time in 1803. According to these *Mémoires*, the authenticity of which is far from being guaranteed, Gabrielle had been prostituted from the age of sixteen by her own mother to King Henri III., in return for the payment of an income of 6,000 crowns, Montigny, who was the go-between in this negotiation, keeping for himself the third of that sum; finally, the Marquis of Coeuvres sold his daughter to Zamet, a rich financier, and to certain other parties; then Gabrielle, given to the Cardinal of Guise for certain fine deniers, proceeded to give herself, gratis and of her own free will, to the Duke of Longueville, to the Duke of Bellegarde and to various gentlemen in the neighborhood of Coeuvres, such as Brunet and Stenay; finally, Bellegarde had ended by prostituting her to the King. (See the *Hist. de Paris* of Dulaure, 12-mo. edition, Volume V., pages 189 and following.) But it might easily be proved that Bassompierre, or the author of the *Nouveaux Mémoires*, printed under his name, has confused persons, facts and epochs. He has, it may be, attributed to Gabrielle alone all the gallantries of which her sisters and relatives were guilty; for in the *Maison de la Bourdaisière*, Talleman des Réaux tells us, was "the most fertile race in gallant women

*Is't not a thing at which to quake
To see a great but lackey king
Turn a woman into a shameless thing
And of a whore an angel make!

that France ever saw, including as many as twenty-five or twenty-six of this sort, either religious or married, all of whom made love most haughtily; hence it was, it came to be said that the arms of la Bourdaisière were a 'handful of vetches' (*poignée de vesces*: women of evil life) for it was found, by a happy accident, that in the family's coat of arms was a hand sowing vetches." And so the following quatrain was made:

*Nous devons benir ceste main
Qui sème avec tant de largesses,
Pour le plaisir du genre humain,
Quantité de si belles vesces.**

Gabrielle, having become the titular mistress of the King, still kept up, nevertheless, secret relations with her ancient lover, M. de Bellegarde, whom she always loved; but she had dismissed, by design and not without some noise, all the men whom scandal had reported to be her gallants. Thus she had quarrelled with the Duke of Longueville, after she had demanded the letters which he had had from her, while we are assured that she revenged herself coolly on the indiscretions of this Seigneur, who boasted of having been the marshal of the King's dwelling. However, Henri IV. was only jealous of Bellegarde. "He commanded ten times that he be slain," says Tallemant des Réaux, "then he repented when he came to consider that he had taken her from him." One night, M. de Praslin came to warn the King that Bellegarde was to be found shut up in the chamber of the Duchess of Beaufort. The King arose, trembling with wrath; he dressed himself in haste, took his sword in hand and followed M. de Praslin with a sigh; but when he arrived at the entrance of the Duchess' apartment, he was struck with remorse and paused. "Ah!" he said, "that would put her out too much!" And he returned to

*We ought to bless the hand that showers
Such largess on us wretches,
For the pleasure of our human hours,
So many handsome vetches.

his couch without troubling the tête-à-tête of the two lovers. Another time, Bellegarde and the Duchess were once more together and did not wait for the King; Henri IV presented himself at the door and demanded that it be opened; there was no other door by which Bellegarde could leave. The Duchess invented all sorts of pretexts to induce the King to leave; but he insisted, commanded and grew angry. The chambermaid of Gabrielle (it was a girl named la Rousse, who knew her trade marvelously well) concealed Bellegarde, half clad in a little closet opening off an alcove, and destined to hold comfitures, spices and sugar-plums. The King was then brought in. His Majesty regarded with a defiant air the accusing traces which his rival had left in his flight. He sat down silently, and then, suddenly, complaining of hunger, demanded comfitures. He went straight to the door of the closet, found it locked, and demanded the key; when it was not given him, he threatened to break the door down. Bellegarde had had time to complete his toilet and to leap out the window. It was La Rousse who then appeared to disconcert the suspicions of the King. "I see well enough, Sire," said Gabrielle, who determined to take advantage of the occasion, "I see well enough that you would treat me like the others whom you have loved, and that you, in your changing humor, are seeking some pretext to break with me; I will prevent that by retiring at once." She burst into tears, which the King dried with his kisses, beseeching her to calm herself and to pardon him. It is thus that the adventure is reported in the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*. Popular tradition added a few details more conformable to the character of Henri IV. According to the tale repeated by all the versifiers of Ana, Bellegarde had hidden himself under Gabrielle's bed, and the King, taking the place which his grand squire had quitted, had demanded dried sweetmeats; la Rousse, having brought him a number of boxes, the King hurled one under the bed. "All the world must live!" he cried gayly to his mistress. (See the *Menagiana*, Volume II, page 71.)*

*(J. U. N.'s Note:) See a preceding chapter in which the King appears as Francis I and the lover as Brissac.

The rumor had been spread that the birth of César, Duke of Vendôme, was not to be attributed to the King; an anecdote which Sully does not hesitate to admit to his *Mémoires*, would appear to have been the source of this slanderous report. Alibour, first physician to the King, having visited Gabrielle, who was indisposed, came to announce to Henri IV "that he had found her in a state of slight emotion, but that her malady would have a happy outcome." The King inquired if it was necessary to bleed her. "Sire, I do not believe so; it would be better to wait until she is half-term," replied Alibour.—"What do you mean to tell me, my good man?" replied the King wrathfully, "are you dreaming? Are we dealing with pregnancy? I know the terms; you know nothing about it, or else more evil fellows have made you speak."—"Sire, I do not know your terms," replied Alibour, "but I know that before seven months what I have told you will be verified." The prediction of the physician, as a matter of fact, was verified: Gabrielle had an accouchement, but Alibour did not live to witness the event. It was said that he had been poisoned. Talle-mant des Réaux had given the explanation of this anecdote, so frequently invoked against the memory of Gabrielle in the following passage, which M. Paulin Paris replaced in his edition, following the original manuscript: "The truth of the story of the good Alibour, first physician to the King, is that Henry IV had a gonorrhea which engendered a carnosity and later a retention of urine, of which he died at Monceaux. And M. d'Alibour remarked that the King was not capable of procreating during this flow of corrupt semen. It was a medical question; but the pregnancy of Madame de Beaufort was too far advanced to leave any question." (See the *Histor.*, third edition, Volume I, page 112.) The elder son of Gabrielle was legitimatized in the same manner as his brother, Alexandre, and his sister, Henriette. Their mother would certainly have married the King, if she had not died of poisoning while efforts were being made at Rome to break the marriage of Henri IV. and Marguerite of Valois. M. de Sancy fell into disgrace for having dared to say to the King,

who consulted him upon his project of remarrying with Madame de Beaufort, that, "whore for whore, he would prefer the daughter of Henri II. to the daughter of Madame d'Estrées, who had died in a brothel." (See the story of Sully in Tallemant des Réaux.) Sully, who was no less opposed than M. de Sancy to this shameful misalliance, and who combatted it with more diplomacy, nevertheless affirms, in his *Mémoires*, that "the King was never resolved to marry a woman of joy."

The more Henri IV. evidenced his light passion for his "beautiful angel," the more energetically did public opinion turn against the favorite, who had not been rehabilitated by marriage. Her amours with the Duke of Bellegarde were so well known, even among the lower people that one frequently heard there this proverbial remark, which has been preserved for us in the *Banquet et Après-Diné du Comte d'Arete*, a pamphlet of the famous Leaguer, Louis of Orleans: "The fine swords like to accompany the fine scabbards." The Parisians, who were always in a ferment over the League, detested the Duchess of Beaufort on account of the bad manners which were attributed to her in their remarks and their *pasquils*. The hatred which this favorite had aroused against herself was reflected also on the King: "the people," wrote P. de l'Éstoile, under date of the 13th of April, 1596, "the people, who are a heady animal, inconstant and fitful,* began now to speak as much evil of their King as they before had spoken good, finding occasion in the fact that he amused himself a little too much with Madame la Marquise." In a *pasquil* "very villainous and scandalous" (*très-vilain et scandaleux*) which was then current, there were verses in which the King was not spared any more than his mistress:

*Ha! vous parlez de vostre roy!
—Non, fais, je vous jure, ma foy!
Par Dieu! j'ay l'ame trop réelle:†*

*The "windy plebs."

†Ha! so you speak of that king of yours!
But come, on my word, why speak of whores!
By God! such a king is not for us:

*Je parle de Sardanapale,
Com' sempre star in bordello,
No fa Hercole immortello
Au royaume de Conardise,
Ou, par madame la Marquise,
Les grans noms sont mis à monceaux
Et toute la France en morceaux,
Pour assouvir son putanisme.†*

All the honest folk, all the good citizens, were indignant at the idea of a union between the King and a dishonored woman which had already cut off the Queen of France. A satirist published the following *huitain* on the subject of this pretty marriage, which did not yet exist, except in the promise signed by the hand of Henri IV:

*Mariez-vous, de par Dieu! sire,
Votre heritier est tout certain,
Puisqu'aussy bien un peu de cire
Legitime un fils de putain:
Putain dont les soeurs sont putantes,
La grand'mère le fut jadis,
La mère, cousines et tantes,
Horsmis madame de Sourdis!†*

*I speak of Sardanapalus.
Since being always *in bordello*
Does not make Hercules *immortello*
In the realm of cowardice,
Where by Madame la Marquise
The greatest names are turned to naught
And all of France is torn and wrought
To satisfy his whorishness.

*Yes, marry, sire, for God's sake,
Nor for an heir need you fear more,
Since a little candle-wax can make
Legitimate the son of a whore:
A whore whose sisters are termagants,
As her grandmother used to be,
Her mother, cousins and her aunts,
All except Madame de Sourdis!

Madame de Sourdis, as we have said above, was the beloved of the old Chancellor of Cheverny, and she had by him a son whom the King himself held at the baptismal font, at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. "Sire," remarked the widwife, as she handed him the infant, "be careful to hold it very well, for it is quite heavy."—"I am not astonished," replied Henri IV, "the seals are still hanging from its rump!" Gabrielle did not have the time to achieve her ends. She was carried off in a few hours by a sudden malady, which had all the characteristics of a poisoning. Her rivals and her enemies could not pardon her, even after her death; inasmuch as her obsequies were conducted by her brother-in-law, the Marechal de Balagny, natural son of a bishop of Valence, while her six sisters, "still more dissolute than she," assisted at the ceremony, the poet Sigogne, proceeded to compose this *sixain*, which Sauval has preserved in the *Amours des Rois de France*:

*J'ay vu passer sous ma fenestre
Les six Pechez mortels vivants,
Conduits par le bastard d'un prestre,
Qui tous ensemble alloient chantants
Un Requiescat in pace
Pour le septiesme trespasse.**

Henri IV. could not live without a titular mistress, which fact, however, did not prevent him from taking as many transients (*volantes*) as offered. Madame de Beaufort was barely inhumed when the ladies of the court began disputing as to who should succeed her in the good graces of the King; the successor was found to be Mademoiselle Henriette d'Entragues. She was the daughter of that beautiful and gentle Marie Touchet, who had been loved by Charles IX., and who was married to Francois de Balzac,

*Beneath my window I've seen pass
Six mortal sins in living file,
Led by some priest's bastard-ass,
And singing all the while
A requiem uncomforted
For the seventh which was dead.

Seigneur d'Entragues. This demoiselle, aged nineteen to twenty years, was distinguished no less by her wit than by her beauty. She possessed above all, according to Sully, "that sharp tongue (*bec affilé*), which, on many occasions rendered her company most agreeable." Mademoiselle d'Entragues was so well recommended to the King by persons who desired to make of her a favorite that the King at once experienced the desire "to see her, then to see her again, then to love her." He did love her, as soon as he had seen her; and Mademoiselle d'Entragues, faithful to the lessons of her mother, and especially to those of her brother, readily permitted herself to be loved. She was not, it was remarked, an apprentice; and yet, she bargained for long over those final favors which Henri IV. claimed with all the ardor of a lover and all the authority of a King. We are dealing here with one of the most monstrous traffics in Prostitution furnished us by the history of the loves of kings. The family of Entragues, the father, the mother, their friends and their advisers, were all more or less concerned in these shameful negotiations, the object of which was an immodest bargain. One hundred thousand crowns were demanded for the virtue of Mademoiselle d'Entragues. Some memoirs relate that the sum was reduced to 50,000. In any case, an agreement was reached as to the price; but money was not all: Mademoiselle d'Entragues, on the advice of her father and mother, demanded a promise of marriage, under this strange condition, that she should furnish the King a male child within the course of a year! "I am so closely watched," remarked Henriette d'Entragues to her lover, "that it is impossible to accord you all the proofs of love, proofs which I cannot refuse to the greatest King in the world. All we need is an occasion, and I can see clearly enough that we shall never have any liberty if we do not get away from M. and Madame d'Entragues." The latter consented to close their eyes as soon as they had in their hands the promise of marriage signed and sealed in due form. "This pimpery and these female wiles so well cajoled the King," says Sully, that the promise was sub-

scribed and given "for the conquest of a treasure which perhaps he was not to find." Sully had the courage to make every effort in his power to dissuade his master from this amorous folly, which threatened to cost him more than 100,000 crowns. He even tore up the promise of marriage which the King showed him: "If you will only recall," he remarked to him with firmness, "all that you have said to me formerly of this girl and her brother, the Count of Auvergne, during the lifetime of Madame the Duchess (of Beaufort), remarks which you have made to me and orders you gave me to see to it that all this baggage (for it was thus you then expressed yourself in speaking of the household of M. and Madame d'Entragues) left Paris,—if you will recall all this, you will relieve yourself of your present doubt, you will count less on finding what you are looking for, and, in any case, you will think that this is not something which is worth purchasing for 100,000 crowns, while God grant it does not cost you more some future day!"

This advice, coming from a good and faithful servitor, was sustained by all the gallant distractions which the party contrary to Mademoiselle d'Entragues could conceive. Every day, new maidens were "produced," but these, chosen among the prettiest and the most seductive, only served in a manner the more to excite the passion of the King for Mademoiselle d'Entragues. "He did not yet possess Mademoiselle d'Entragues," says Bassompierre, in his *Mémoires*, "and slept sometimes with a beautiful lass named La Glandée." He was in the habit of going to the Hôtel de Zamet, where she was brought to him. But La Glandée was very soon dethroned by La Fanuche.

Tallemant des Réaux, who has revealed to us so many new and curious details concerning Henri IV., reports a rather free *bon mot* on the subject of La Fanuche, who had been presented to him as a virgin, but who was not by any means an apprentice. (See the edition of the *Historiettes*, published with commentaries by MM. Monmerqué and Paulin Paris, members of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Volume I.)

This Fanuche had been for long a courtesan in the mode, in the grand style of the beautiful Imperia and the Italian courtezans; she was renowned above all for her beautiful body and its secret perfections. A quatrain, published in 1637, in the second part of the *Poésies et Rencontres* of the Sieur de Neuf-Germain, poet *hétéroclite* of Gaston of Orleans, shows us that Fanuche, at this period (she was then more than forty years old), was still worthy of the homage of her admirers and of the praises of gallant poetry.

But Henri IV. was not content with these transitory amours; he desired a permanent mistress; his heart was fixed on it, and he would have given half his realm to possess Mademoiselle d'Entragues. He possessed her through the promise of marriage and a gift of 100,000 crowns. He was extended credit for this sum. When it came time to pay, he did so sulkily; he ordered them to bring into his study the fine-sounding currency, which was spread out in front of him on the floor. "*Ventre-saint-gris!*" he exclaimed, in beholding the piles of money at his feet, "there is one night well paid for!" He devoted himself from then on to this conquest, which had cost him so dearly, and elevated Mademoiselle d'Entragues to the rank of favorite, without failing to fall into infidelities now and then, which rendered him neither less tender nor less attentive toward her.

His divorce had been pronounced in the court of Rome, but, however powerful his love may have been, he permitted himself to become involved in a political alliance and wedded Maria de' Medici in 1600. Mademoiselle d'Entragues, who had vainly opposed this union, then employed all her forces in preserving the title and functions of favorite, having given up the idea of becoming Queen of France. Henri IV. had created her Marchioness of Verneuil, and he did not appear to be resolved, despite his marriage, to cease relations with her, whom he preferred to all others.

Henriette de Balzac, however, whose character at once violent, pliable and despotic had exerted a great influence over the King,

did not spare him grumblings and complaints; she said to him one day "that it was a good thing he was a King, for otherwise no one would be able to endure him, and that he stunk like a carrion." (See the *Historiette* of Henri IV, in Tallemant des Réaux.) She called him "Captain Good Will" (*Capitaine Bon Vouloir*), because he was always ready to pay gallant tribute and because he felt himself drawn toward all women in general. The Marchioness of Verneuil, who lodged in the Hôtel de la Force, near the Louvre, shared with the Queen, so to speak, the attentions of the King and the assiduities of the courtiers; she did not despair of being able, one day or another, to win out over Maria de' Medici, whom she never referred to otherwise than as *l'Italienne*, or *la grosse banquière* ("the big money-lender"). This public installation of a titular mistress opposite the Louvre was a scandal which made the people murmur, and caused the true servants of Henri IV. to groan.

In order to separate him from this astute woman, whose eye was always on the crown of France, a number of amorous intrigues were formed, destined to diminish the power of the Marchioness of Verneuil by diminishing her prestige. But Henri IV., in running the gamut of amorous adventures which were offered him, was tireless in coming back "warmer than ever" (*plus échauffé*) to the Marchioness. In 1600, according to Basompierre (old and new *Mémoires*), he became "a little" amorous of one of the Queen's maids named la Bourdaisière; then of Madame de Boinville, wife of a maître des requêtes; then of Mademoiselle Clein; then of the wife of a counsellor named Quelin; then of the Countess of Lemoux; then of a lady of honor of the Queen called Foulebon, etc. The Marchioness of Verneuil was not less fêted; but the example of the King had undoubtedly taught her to bide her time, and it may be supposed that she was not lacking in consolations. A saying of Henri IV., reported by Tallemant des Réaux, leads us to think that he was not as jealous of the Marchioness as he had been of Gabrielle d'Estrées. He was told that M. de Guise was amorous of Madame de Verneuil.

He did not appear to be worried about the matter, but said: 'Well, we must leave them bread and whores! They have been deprived of so many other things!' " The Marchioness of Verneuil felt sufficiently sure of the King's attachment not to have to fear any chance rivals; nevertheless, her standing was almost equalled for a moment by that of Jacqueline du Bueil, daughter of a brave gentleman of Brittany, Claude du Bueil, Seigneur of Courcillon. The King, during one of his quarrels with his titular mistress, had passed the time with this young and charming person, who dared refuse him nothing, and who, as a result, became pregnant. It was necessary to find a husband to assume the responsibility. "On Tuesday, the 5th of the month of October (1604)," ingenuously relates P. de l'Estoile in his *Registre-Journal* of the reign of Henri IV, "at six o'clock in the morning, Mademoiselle de Bueil, new mistress of the King, wed at Saint-Maur-des-Fossez the young Chauvalon, a gentleman, good musician and player of the lute, a loafer (as was said) for the rest, even so far as the goods of this world are concerned. He had the honor of being the first to sleep with the bride, but lighted, as was said, all the time he was there, by torches and watched over by gentlemen, by order of the King, who the following day slept with her at Paris in the lodging of Montauban, where he was in bed until two hours of the afternoon. It was said that her husband had slept in a little garret above the King's chamber, and thus was over his wife, although there was a floor between the two." This new mistress threatened to evict the Marchioness of Verneuil, but the latter was not at a loss for a means of bringing the King back to her side; she saw to it that the heart of Jacqueline de Bueil was vigorously beseiged by the young Prince of Joinville, brother of the Duke of Guise, who was her own suitor and very devoted to her. When the two lovers were stretched out together, the King was advised, whereupon he complained bitterly to the old Duchess of Guise: "That a man may marry my mistress at the proper time," he said, "that is well and good; but that one should dispute her with me and

put himself in the place of a gallant, that is something I will not suffer!" He would have caused the Prince of Joinville to be arrested, if this too-favored rival had not tacitly renounced the possession of Jacqueline by leaving her and the court. Henri IV. forgave all; Mademoiselle de Bueil was made Countess of Moret, and the son whom she brought into the world after the departure of the Prince of Joinville, was legitimatized like those of Gabrielle d'Estrées had been.

The Marchioness of Verneuil kept her "Captain Good Will" charmed; she had left with him memories which always brought him back to her side despite all his other affairs. When she was accused of being involved in a conspiracy against the king, along with her father, her brother and other lords, she only laughed mockingly; when she was condemned, she had but to see the King in order to obtain grace for all the conspirators, and although her role as favorite ended about this period, Henri IV. frequently went to see her, and showed her none the less favor. The Marchioness was able to divert him better than any other person in the world, and the Queen was always jealous of her. In March, 1607, His Majesty had betaken himself with the court to Chantilly, where Madame de Verneuil was sojourning. He had brought with him a maid named Lahaye, "whom he supported," says De l'Estoile, "and whom he took with him everywhere he went." The Marchioness said to him, jokingly, as was her custom: "You have some bad provisioners with you, since they lodge you at Lahaye in the wind and rain!" This Lahaye fell into disgrace the following year and took the veil in the Abbey of Fonterrault, "the final and common enough retreat of ladies of her trade," says P. de l'Estoile (under date of the 30th of March, 1608), "where sometimes they do not discontinue it." An anecdote, related in the notes of Lenglet-Dufresnoy on the *Journal de Henri IV.* (under date of the 12th. of March, 1604), informs us that the King took with him everywhere in his suite, on his travels and to his devotions, a troop of women and maidens of the court; thus, when he went to hear the sermons of Père

Gonthier, the Jesuit, in different churches of Paris, these ladies came there in high toilet in order to win a look and a smile from Henri IV. Once, when the Jesuit was preaching at Saint-Gervais, the Marchioness of Verneuil and many ladies came to seat themselves near the King. They whispered among themselves, and the Marchioness exchanged signs of intelligence with Henri IV., who had all he could do to keep from laughing. Père Gonthier stopped short in the midst of his preaching, and, turning toward the King, said with bitterness: "Sire, will you never stop coming with a seraglio to hear the word of God and to create so great a scandal in the holy place?" The King did not resent the reprimand; but he was no more reserved than ever in his manners, and he took no pains to avoid giving scandal to his subjects.

His last amour, the one, perhaps, which placed the poignard in the hand of Ravailac, was carried to the highest point of depravity. It is one of the strangest episodes in the history of Prostitution at the court of France. "The King, in those times," wrote Pierre de l'Estoile, in his *Journals*, under date of the month of June, 1609, "being hopelessly enamoured of Madame, the Princess of Condé, esteemed the most beautiful lady, not only of the court, but of all France, gave rise, by his deportment, to new talk on the part of the curious and the gossiping, who already were speaking too licentiously of His Majesty, and of the villainies and corruptions of the court." The young Charlotte-Marguerite, daughter of Henri, Duke of Montmorency, Marshal and Constable of France, had appeared for the first time at court that year. "She was so young," says the author of the *Amours du Grand Alcandre*, "that it seemed she was barely out of infancy. Her beauty was miraculous and all her actions were so agreeable that there was marvel everywhere. Alcandre, seeing her dance, with a dart in her hand, since, for the ballet, they (the ladies of the Queen) were representing the nymphs of Diana, felt his heart pierced so violently that this wound lasted as long as his life. The Constable had cast eyes upon Bassompierre, with a

view to making the latter his son-in-law, but the King, who had seen this miracle of beauty and of grace, did not hesitate to seek another marriage which would leave the field free to his shameful designs. "I have become not merely enamoured, but furiously so and more, of Mademoiselle de Montmorency," he said to Bassompierre, who was one of his companions at table and in debauchery. "If you wed her and she loves you, I shall hate you; if she loves me, you will hate me. It will be better that this should not be the cause of breaking our good relations, for I love you very affectionately. I am resolved to marry her to my nephew, the Prince of Condé, and so to keep her in my family. This shall be the consolation and amusement of that old age upon which I am already entering. I shall give to my nephew, who loves the chase a thousand times better than the ladies, 100,000 pounds a year as a pastime, and I want no other grace of her beyond affection, without seeking for any more." Bassompierre retired before what amounted to a formal command, and Mademoiselle de Montmorency espoused the Prince of Condé. From then on, the King abandoned himself, without shame, to all the extravagancies of his passion, which, says l'Estoile, "was so great that he was seen to change, in less than no time, in habits, beard and countenance." The poet Malherbe complacently lent his muse to the expression of this adulterous passion, which, if we are to believe the stanzas composed under the name of *Alcandre*, did not find *Oranthe* insensible. However this may be, the King "showing himself so worn in the chase after this beautiful prey, for whom he would have bartered all the world at need, even to the mother of Mary, the Prince of Condé addressed to His Majesty lively reproaches, and even went so far, it is said, as to call him b . . ." (See the *Mém.-Journaux* of P. de l'Estoile, edition of MM. Champollion, page 537, reign of Henri IV.) The Prince of Condé, "being well warned that the King was making use of his mother as an instrument in corrupting the modesty of his wife, entered into great words with her, abused her and called her *maquerelle*, or other names which

were no better, reproaching her with having shame painted upon her forehead." This incredible passage, which pictures for us a mother laboring to dishonor her son, is one of the sorriest witnesses to the moral degradation of courtiers at this epoch. Pierre de l'Estoile adds one last stroke to this hideous picture, by attributing to the Queen herself, a complicity in this general conspiracy against the Princess of Condé. "I am aware," said Maria de' Medici, "that for this fine bargain there are already thirty maquereles at need, and if I mix in the affair, I shall make the thirty-first." The Prince of Condé, however, escaped the violent ruses which threatened his conjugal honor; he rescued his wife and took her out of France, in order to place her in security in Brussels. Henri IV. would have gone there to seek her, weapons in his hands, if the dagger of a regicide had not broken the mesh of his culpable projects by taking away his life.

The frenzied love of Henri IV. for the Princess of Condé had produced a redoublement of activity among the complacent courtiers of love, then employed for the pleasures of the King. It is one of the most remarkable characteristics of Prostitution at this period, this zeal of those at court in serving as officious go-betweens, in affairs of gallantry, not only for the King, but also the princes and the great. All moral sense would appear to have been lost, to such a point that a gentleman would have made no scruples against lending himself to the infamous maneuvers of the agents of debauchery, provided he might thereby content the amorous caprice of a powerful protector. Each one, in order to win the good graces of his patron, did not blush to become at need a vile pimp; each one felt proud and happy to produce a new marvel of beauty destined for the royal couch. Thus, one should accuse these miserable purveyors, rather than the King himself, who, it is true, was incapable of resisting their immodest excitations. The most perfect type of pimper, the principal accomplice in the misdemeanors of Henri IV., was the Italian, Sebastian Zamet, who from the simple cordwainer which he had been under Henri III., had soon become "lord of seven-

teen hundred thousand crowns, counsellor to the King, Governor of Fontainebleau, superintendent of the Queen's house, Baron of Billy, and of Murat, etc." Zamet, whom Henri IV. familiarly called *Bastien*, and whose jovial humor, unbridled wit and servile devotion were appreciated by the King, had, so to speak, a finger in all the amours of his master. It was he who fulfilled the mysterious functions of superintendent of pleasures to the King. It was in his magnificent apartment, situated in the rue de la Cerisaie, that the King took part in debauched gatherings with the young lords of his court; it was in this hotel that the King came frequently to pass the night with the women whom Zamet took it upon himself to provide; it was here that all the King's mistresses were paid their scot. Zamet had two assistants in the vile trade which he practiced with so much cleverness and cynicism in the service of Henri IV; they were the Duke of Bellegarde and the Marquis de Varenne. The former, who had been one of those called the "maquereaux in ordinary to His Majesty," (see the *Tocsin des Massacreurs*, edition of 1579, page 47), excelled in the art of choosing fresh morsels for the King's mouth; he knew how to indoctrinate the girls and how to "train them for the royal menage, like good mares." He had "produced" Gabrielle d'Estrées; he later produced Jacqueline du Bueil. Varenne, who had commenced by being cook in the household of Madame, the sister of the King, had advanced so well in the favor of this Prince, that he had become comptroller-general of posts and counsellor of State; he was especially charged with bearing *poulets* and messages of love; he was called the *maître*, or the minister of pleasures to the King" (*ministre des voluptes du roi*: see the *Life* of M. du Plessis-Mornay, Book II.) "The maquereaux are as good as marquises!" cries d'Aubigné, in the *Confession de Sancy*, in speaking of Varenne, who had "transubstantiated the porridges (*potages*) of the kitchen into puddings (*tripotages*) of state, and pellets (*poulets*) of paper into pullets (*poulets*) of human flesh."

The women and the greatest ladies also mingled in this dishonest traffic, which gained them the favor of the Prince. We have seen above how the Dowager-princess of Condé had leagued herself with a "green gallant" (*verd galant*) with a gray beard against the chastity of her daughter-in-law and the honor of her own son. We have seen how Madame de Sourdis favored the adulterous relations of her niece, Garbrielle d'Estrées. The Princess of Conti (Mademoiselle de Guise), who had also been one of the mistresses of the "great Alcandre," did not cease to seek new amusements for him and was tireless in corrupting her own rivals. We might mention a great number of other women of high name who were always ready to second the libertine fantasies of the most debauched of kings. In the *Bibliothèque* (imaginary) *de Maître Guillaume*, a facetious satire frequently cited in the notes to the *Confession de Sancy*, we note the two following works: *Sept livres de Chasteté, faits par la Varenne, dédiés à Madame de Retz*, and the *Préceptes de production, autrement de maquerellage, composés par Madame de Villers, commentés par madame de Vitry et dédiés à la Varenne*. A facetious work of the same genre, which is only known to us by an extract inserted in the *Journal* of P. de l'Estoile (under date of the month of July, 1609), describes still better the scandalous *maquignonnage* which was practiced especially for the profit of Henri IV: In a pleasant Request to the king, one Clavelle, who calls himself the "companion of Duret," remonstrates humbly with His Majesty "that he had practiced and exercised as well and better than he (Duret) the trade of maquerellage (which is one of the principal trades, and one to which the mind of man is most given), having conducted very difficult enterprises on those coasts with much more honor and less hazard than Duret (the latter not being able to teach him anything, to do which he defies him and any man.) Witness the maquerellages (he says) of such and such (whom he specifies in his Request), such and such a bargain (of which you yourself are not ignorant, Sire), brought to perfection and effectiveness by his diligence and prin-

cial enterprises, and where another, even though well versed in the art, would have lost his way and his pains (*ses pas et ses peines*), and a thousand other little services of the same cloth, with which he has obliged the great and little at the court." Tallemant des Réaux relates that the Marshal of Roquelaure, who was one-eyed, accompanying the King in the royal carriage, inquired of a merchant of maquereaux how he distinguished the males from the females. "Jesus!" replied this fish-vender. "There is nothing easier; the males are one-eyed." And Tallemant adds: "He was accused of having sometimes played the 'ruffian' to his master."

Surely, the innumerable amours of Queen Marguerite and those of the *Grand Alcandre* related very summarily, as we have endeavored to do, form the most curious and the most characteristic episode in the history of Prostitution at the end of the 16th. century.

CHAPTER XXXIX

DULAURE remarks with reason, in his *Histoire de Paris* (12-mo. edition, Volume IV., page 492), that the scenes of lust described so complacently by Brantôme as a picture of the state of manners at the court “are like those which one might expect to find in the annals of a house of debauchery;” but Brantôme, who lived till 1614, had quitted the court in 1582, following a courtier’s disappointment, in order to retire to his land,* where he wrote his *memoires*, which have not all come down to us. His niece, Madame de Duretal, took care to burn the most scandalous of these, and we may judge what the others were like by those which remain. Brantôme did not see with his own eyes the end of the reign of Henri III. nor the whole of the reign of Henri IV. He only knew what took place at the Louvre through correspondence with friends whom he had left behind, and he abstains from recording upon their testimony, which was more or less partial, all those incidents for which he is unable to vouch as a witness. Thus, we are in a position to ask of him no information concerning the history of Prostitution at the court of Henri III. and that of Henri IV. Brantôme, if we may judge by a few pages in which he shows himself the implacable enemy of Italian debauchery, undoubtedly must have groaned over the shameful aberrations of the last of the Valois, surrounded by vile mignons. He believed that, under the influence of these strange horrors, the *joli train* of the court of France had ceased, and that the love of ladies, so recommended by French traditions, no longer existed except among a few old courtiers and incorruptible gentlemen. It is not to be supposed, however, that the abominable sect of mignons and hermaphro-

*Cf., Horace (“*Beatus ille qui procul negotiis*”), Martial (“*Vitam quae faciunt beatior*”), etc.

dites had destroyed all honest gallantry, or that the ladies at the court of Henri III. had become neutral or indifferent concerning a question in which they were always the first to manifest an interest. It might even be said, to the honor of the mignons, that they were not so negligent of the fair sex as one might suspect from their villainous reputation. Henri III. had had mistresses; his favorites had them also, and a number of them who died tragic deaths could blame for them none other than the women.

Henri III., when he was as yet only Duke of Anjou, loved Renée de Rieux, under the name of La belle Châteauneuf; she was one of the maids of honor of Catherine de' Medici, whom the famous Huguenot pamphlet entitled *Le Tocsin des Massacreurs* probably did not slander when it branded them all with the scourge of Prostitution. "The public is by no means ignorant," one reads in this pamphlet (page 49 of the edition of 1570), "of the immodesty of the maids in the suite of the Queen mother, as witness La Rouet, Montigny, Châteauneuf, Atri and others, whose chastity is so little known that it would not be able to find a single witness among all the courtiers. When the Duke of Anjou left for Poland, where he was called by the vow of the Polish nobles, who had offered him the crown, he desired to find a husband for Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, to whom he had given, it was said, a written promise of marriage. He sought among the seigneurs of the court one who might be able to take his place. Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, who was of a haughty and inflexible character, did not, it is true, lend herself to this matrimonial traffic. The Duke of Anjou cast eyes upon Nantouillet, provost of Paris, one of his companions at table and in pleasure, and Nantouillet declined very haughtily the honor which was offered him, and replied to the new King of Poland that "to wed a daughter of joy, he would wait until His Majesty had set up bordeaux in the Louvre." This reply was reported to Charles IX., who preserved a resentment for it towards Nantouillet. A few days afterward (September, 1573), a letter written from Paris by a courtier was intercepted, in which the

writer spoke in these terms of a great scandal which had taken place and which was the chief topic of conversation in the city and the court: "I have seen," said the author of this letter, "the three Kings who are called the Tyrant, the King of Poland, and the third who is the King of Navarre, who, by way of rendering grace to God for peace and their own deliverance, do not cease to despise him and provoke him by the lives they lead, by their stinking and lascivious ways and other such sardanapalisms. I know that these three fine sires recently caused themselves to be served at a solemn banquet which they gave, by harlots wholly naked. . . ." MM. Champollion, in their edition of the *Journal de Henri III.*, have abstained from reproducing certain obscene passages which Pierre de l'Estoile had inserted throughout the length of his manuscript. The banquet had been but the prelude to scenes still more unheard-of. The three Kings "being in doubt as to how they were to employ the rest of the night, sent word to Nantouillet that they would come to sup with him at the hôtel d'Hercule, situated at the corner of the rue des Augustine. Nantouillet in vain excused himself from receiving such guests as these; he was forced to obey the King's order and caused the supper to be served. The guests, half drunken, had formed a conspiracy to sack the hôtel d'Hercule; they took possession, as a matter of fact, of the silver plate, forced the coffers and the cupboards, took there everything they found that was precious and did not leave until they were laden down with booty, despite the complaints and prayers of Nantouillet. The next day, the rumor ran about that the sum of 50,000 francs, stolen from the strong-box of Nantouillet, had been given with great joy, seeing the source from which it came, to the belle of Châteaunneuf, in order to recompense her and avenge her for the refusal which Nantouillet had made of his hand. The latter went to lay a complaint before the first President of Parliament, who, before proceeding further in this affair, drew up remonstrances to Charles IX. "Spare yourself the trouble," replied the King, "and give Nantouillet to understand that he will have

more than he wants if he demands justice." Nantouillet took the hint and withdrew his complaint.

The Duke of Anjou had already broken with Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, or at least, he had publicly given her a rival in the person of the Princess of Condé, whose portrait he wore suspended about his neck. His love for this charming Princess resisted even absence. In coming back from Poland to succeed Charles IX., he met his mistress once more; but he had the chagrin to lose her almost at once. Mademoiselle de Châteauneuf then endeavored to resume her ancient right over the heart of the Prince, who had not ceased to show her great affection. She was once more, for a moment, the King's mistress, although the manners of Henri had undergone a sad metamorphosis; she was so intolerant toward the mignons that Henri III. recurred to the idea of marrying her off in order to be rid of her. He was married himself to Louise de Vaudemont; he knew that this Princess had been sought after by the Count of Brienne, who was always taken with her. "Count," he said to him in the tone of a master, "I have come to deprive you of your mistress; but in exchange, I am going to give you my own, and you are going to marry Châteauneuf." This was no pleasantry; and the Count of Brienne could only escape this marriage by precipitately leaving the court. The beautiful Châteauneuf was quite content with this; she did not desire a husband, and she desired always to preserve her title of King's mistress; but she was imprudent enough to enter into an open contest with the young Queen, and Catherine de' Medici forbade her to reappear at court. The King would not support her, and when she saw herself abandoned by this Prince, whose mignons had irritated him against her, the spite she felt led her to an act of which she soon repented. This maid, "so whole-hearted and so disdainful," says Brantôme, "that when some clever and gallant man would come to accost her with a proposal of love, she would reply to him so haughtily and with so great a contempt of love, with words so arrogant, for none knew them better than she,

that he would not return again—this same maid let herself go with one who obtained of her everything a few days before she was married.” It was an Italian named Altoviti, “who was by no means comparable to the other honest gentlemen who had desired to serve her.” Two years afterward, having “found him lechering” (*trouvé paillardant*), De l’Estoile says (September, 1577), she slew him “virilely” with her own hand. Henri III. cared nothing for any but a titular mistress, and he was rejoiced at being thus delivered from the eternal reproaches of Made-moiselle de Châteauneuf, who was always shaming him for his infamous habits. He did not again fall back under the domination of a woman; but, despite his “ruffled mignons,” he came back, from time to time, to the first penchants of his youth. He was accused of having impelled his favorite, René de Villequier, to kill his wife (August, 1577), who was pregnant, “although her husband had not slept with her for more than ten months before.” This lady had for lover the Seigneur de Barbizi, a handsome young Parisian whom she refused to sacrifice to the King’s jealousy. “This murder was found cruel,” says De l’Estoile (*Journal de Henri III*, ancient edition, “as committed on a woman who was pregnant with two children, and strange as being committed in the house of a King (at Poitiers), His Majesty being there and still at court, where lechery is publicly and notoriously practiced among the ladies, who look upon it as a virtue. But the outcome of the affair and the faculty with which Villequier obtained pardon, without any difficulty whatever, led to the belief that he had executed in this matter, merely a secret command of the King, as payment to the lady for her refusal in such a case.” This last phrase belongs to Pierre Dupuy who, better informed than Pierre de l’Estoile, had placed it in his copy instead of the phrase which exists in the original, where one finds merely: “For a report which had been made to him that she had slandered His Majesty in open company.” In a satirical *tombeau* composed at that time upon this tragic event, the “im-

modest" wife was no more spared than was her "execrable" husband:

*Non l'ire, non, non l'honneur, non quelque humeur jalouse
L'ont fait ensanglanter au sang de son espouse.
D'honneur, en eust-il donc? eut-il esté jaloux
D'une qu'il scavoit bien estre commune à tous,
Et que mesme il avoit nourrie en tous delices,
Adheré, consenty, mille fois, à ses vices? . . .
Va, passant, elle a eu justement le salaire
Que merite à bon droit une femme adultere,
Et luy, soit pour jamais dit l'infame bourreau
De celle dont il fut autrefois macquereau!**

The collection of Sauval, published in 1739 under the title of *Mémoires Historiques Concernant les Amours des Rois de France*, contains a number of anecdotes which go to prove that the mignons were more inclined to women than the King. One day, Henri III. "took it in his head to win over the wife of a counsellor of Parliament, not less beautiful than she was virtuous, and having finally come to his ends in his closet in the Louvre, he abandoned her thereafter to his mignons; but this poor lady, then desperate at such an outrage, fell in a spasm and gave up, the ghost in their arms." Another time, la Guiche, one of the mignons, being hopelessly enamoured of Madame Mirande, "matron of tested virtue," the King did not disdain to serve the interests of his favorite, and attracted this lady to the Louvre under pretext of giving her "*un don sur les coches*." The solicitous beauty arrived at the hour when the King was at table;

*Not wrath, not honor, not jealous strife
Have caused him thus to shed the blood of wife;
What could he know of honor's jealous call,
Who knew his wife the property of all,
And also knew he'd made her bed too nice
And trained her, willingly, in every vice?
Ah, friends, you know she is but justly paid
The wages of adulterous wife or maid.
As for the husband, we will not words skimp:
He's now her hangman who was once her pimp.

she was led into a mysterious closet, and there Henri III. himself came to plead the indecent cause of La Guiche. "She was inflexible, and to escape from the danger into which her avidity had precipitated herself, she alleged that an inconvenience common to persons of her sex prevented her from according what was desired; thereupon he caused her to be taken by two valets, and the rest transpired only too quickly. These Tarquins then let go their Lucrece without hearing or caring to hear the tears of blood with which she wept her violated modesty and without being concerned for the pity and horror which she inspired in all the world by her cries and her frightful groans." Another day, it was "the greatest street walkers of Paris" (*les plus grandes coureruses de Paris*) whom the King caused to be brought in his own *coches* to Saint-Cloud. As soon as they had arrived, he ordered that they should be despoiled of their vestments; he then denuded his Swiss guard in similar fashion and turned over to them these unfortunate women, who fled into the gardens with indecent outcries. Accompanied by his mignons and his greatest confidants (*ses plus confidents*) "he took pleasure in considering attentively that which was covered with a veil of darkness, even in all encounters." Such spectacles, horror-inspiring as they are, were not rare at the court, but on a scale infinitely more restrained, and it was not only street walkers and Swiss guards who were the participants. Brantôme speaks, with a reserve which with him is extraordinary (see the *Dames Galantes*, fourth discourse, article 2, on the Love of Girls) of a "fine" comedy entitled *Le Paradis d'amour*, which was invented by a maid of the court, and which was played by herself "in the hall of the Bourbons, behind closed doors, where were only the comedians, who served at once as players and as spectators." There were there but six persons, three women and three men, namely: a prince and his mistress, a seigneur and a great lady "*de riche matière*," a gentleman and the maid who was the author of the piece: "Certainly, altogether a virgin as she was, she played her role as well or possibly better than the married ones;

for she had seen the world elsewhere than in her native country, and, as they say in Spanish: *Rafinada en Segovia*, which is to say, 'refined in Segovia,' which is a proverb in Spain, since good cloth is refined in Segovia."

The ladies of the court had only too greatly profited, since the reign of Francis I., from the lessons learned in this school of Prostitution, which never suspended its scandalous sessions; but their misdemeanors, hidden for long in the shadow of the throne, were suddenly revealed to public information, when the Reformation and the League tore down in succession all the veils which enveloped the private life of kings and the great. The indiscreet eye of the people plunged into abysses of depravation until then unknown; and when the hideous truth became known on all sides, each one endeavored to snatch away the last rags and tatters which had covered it. Thus, in a satirical pamphlet which began to be circulated at Paris in 1587, under the title of *Bibliothèque de Madame de Montpensier*, and which was preserved at that time by Pierre de l'Estoile in his *Registres-Journaux*, a number of imaginary pieces, which were supposed to be a part of this *Bibliothèque*, make allusion to the unbridled conduct of the ladies and maids at the court. Following are the titles of these pieces, which we abstain from commenting on, for they say enough in themselves: "The Manner of Surveying Briefly the Great Meadows" (*La manière d'arpenter brièvement les grans prez*), by Madame de Nevers. "Grandprez being her squire," adds l'Estoile. — "Secrets in Deflowering Pages" (*Secrets pour depuceler les pages*), by M. de Sourdis. — "The Various Platters of Love" (*Les diverses assiettes d'amour*), translated from the Spanish into French by Madame la Maréchale de Retz for Seigneur de Dunes, her squire. — "The Method of Attending to Every Comer on one Foot" (*Le moyen de besoigner à cloche-pied à tout venant*), by Madame de Montpensier (the lame: *la boiteuse*). — "The Ribaldries of the Court" (*Les ribauderies de la cour*), collected by the Sire of Liancour, at the instance of Caboche. — "The Scales (or Birdtrap) of the

Maids of the Court" (*Le tresbuchet des filles de la cour*), by the Lady of Saint-Martin. — "Treatise on the Buffooneries and Pimperies of the Court" (*Traicté des bouffonneries et maquerellages de la cour*), by the Count of Maulevrier. — "The History of Jehanne the Virgin" (*l'Histoire de Jehanne la Pucelle*), by Mademoiselle de Bourdeille.* — "The Rhetoric of Procuresses" (*La rhetorique des maquerelles*), by Madame de la Chastre.† — "Almanac of the Assignations of Love" (*Almanach des assignations d'amour*), by Madame de Pragny. — "The J'en Veux of the Queen's Maids," by Madame de Saint-Martin. — "*Le Foutiquet des demoiselles*," invention of the little La Roche, horseman in ordinary of the peace, etc. We have borrowed these citations sometimes from the edition of Lenglet-Dufresnoy, sometimes from that of the MM. Champollion, without concerning ourselves with the variations which the two editions present. One piece of the same sort and of the same period, the "Manifesto of the Ladies of the Court" (*Manifeste des dames de la cour*) may serve as a commentary to some of the titles of these imaginary books. It is a confession of the greatest female sinners, beginning with the Queen mother, who accuses herself of having reared her children "in all vices, blasphemies and perfidies" (*en tous vices, blasphèmes et perfidies*) and her daughters "in immodest liberty, suffering and authorizing a bordeau at her court" (*en liberté impudique, souffrant et autorisant un bordeau en sa cour*). The Manifesto "given at Charcheau, on a journey to Nérac," and signed *Pericart*, "with permission of Monsieigneur, the Archbishop of Lyons," ends thus: "The damoiselles Victri, Bourdeille, Sourdis, Birague, Surgère and all the rest of the *chou* (*sic*) of the maids of the Queen mother say, all in one voice: 'Ah! my God! What would we do if Thou didst not extend Thy great mercy to us? We cry Thee then in a loud voice to pardon all our sins of the flesh committed with kings, princes, cardinals, gentlemen, bishops, abbots,

*Cf., the famous "Fanny Hill," etc.

†Cf. Aretino, *I Ragionamenti*, "The Art of the Procuress (*Mezzara*)."

friars, poets and all other sorts of folk, of all estates, trades, qualities and conditions, even down to mule drivers, valets, pages and lackeys of gentlemen, thieves, niggards, crop-pates, pock-hides, shriveled skins, and syphilitics.* And let us say with M. de Villequier: My God! Have mercy, and show us Thy great mercy; and if we cannot find husbands, we must betake us to the *Filles-Repenties!*”

We may judge, from this bird's-eye view, how many scandalous adventures there must have been to provide spice for the court chronicles, since at court the old were frequently no wiser than the young; but whatever may have been the relaxation of manners, no pardon was shown those unclever ones who permitted themselves to be taken in the act. Henri himself had accesses of prudery and severity, when an unfortunate publicity happened to betray the mystery of illicit amours. He wanted to cut off the head of the Seigneur de la Loue, who had an intrigue with La Malherbe, one of the Queen's maids of honor; but he contented himself with making the pair marry whether they would or not, and he sent them to pass their honeymoon in the prison of Vincennes, threatening both of them, as De l'Estoile tells us (22d of March, 1578) “for the outrage and excesses done in the house of the Queen, his wife, he (the bridegroom) having been so presumptuous as to render pregnant one of her maids.” Henri IV., who had so many causes for indulgence on this score, must needs punish with extreme rigor the Baron of Termes, brother of the Duke of Bellegarde, who found himself in the same case as the Seigneur de la Loue, “having been surprised” according to De l'Estoile (February, 1604), “couched by night in the chamber of the Queen's maids with La Sagonne, one of the maids of the said lady, whom he had loved and kept for a long time, she being gross on his account, and he saving himself wholly naked, save for his shirt.” Tallemant des Réaux reports this adventure with variations: “He possessed a very amorous manner,” we are told in the *Histoirette de M. de Termes*.

*A truly Rabelaisan catalogue.

"Nothing made so much noise as the gallantry of a maid of the Queen mother named Sagonne. He went familiarly to sleep with her in the Louvre; the governess gave the alarm, and he leaped out the window, but he left his doublet behind him: this was on the first floor of the Louvre, on the perron. The guards of the gate permitted him to save himself, for one easily pardoned the crimes of love." Maria de' Medici, wholly Italian as she was, felt so horribly offended at this terrible scandal, that she besought the King to behead the Baron of Termes. Henri IV. merely exiled him for a few months and did not force him to wed La Sagonne, who was ignominiously expelled, along with Madame de Drou, governess of the maids, the Queen showing herself inflexible, "as she always did," says De l'Estoile, "where a matter of honor or of chastity was concerned."

Henri IV. did not have the right to be too severe in such a case; and while appearing to share the indignation of the Queen, he did not show too much rigor toward the two lovers who had permitted themselves to be caught. It was even said, inasmuch as this adventure had attracted attention to La Sagonne, he had thereupon conceived the desire to make her acquaintance and profited on this score by the absence of M. de Termes. According to Le Duchat, La Sagonne could have been none other than that demoiselle de la Bourdaisière who figures among the mistresses of Henri IV. This Prince was content that his courtiers should imitate him; but he demanded that things should take their course without scandal, and, like Francis I, he showed himself always, at least in words, a very gallant cavalier with regard to the "honor of the ladies." Bassompierre (*Nouveaux Mémoires*, page 171) tells us that: "The King Henri IV. had this weakness for women to overcome in himself, that, while being a tolerable monarch in that he did not kidnap girls from their fathers nor wives from their husbands, still set a very bad example and created scandals in that he did not hide but caused to be known in public the vices which seemliness bids should be hidden."

We have seen, in the preceding chapter of this History, that the King at need, sacrificed fathers and husbands to his amours and even to his fancies. The manners of the court could not have been different from his own. He should be given credit, nevertheless, for having considerably diminished that Italian depravation which the reign of Henri III. had fastened like a leprosy on the young French nobility. Following the publication of the *Hermaphrodites*, in 1605, he pretended to believe that this work had been intended as a satire on his court, rather than on that of Henri III., and he loudly approved the pamphlet of Artus Thomas, "which discovered," De l'Estoile tells us, "the impious and vicious fashions and manners of the court, causing it clearly to be seen that France is now the den of all vices, pleasure and impudence, whereas formerly she was an academy of honor and a seminary of virtue." We must remember, nevertheless, that *la belle galanterie* commences with the reign of Henry IV. and that, if the basis of manners at court was ordinarily corrupt, the form, if one may express oneself thus, was frequently honest and always elegant. The sensual pleasures at this period appeared to be the principal affair,* but they came to take on an allure more refined and more decent; they surrounded themselves with moral delicacies and with a sort of mysticism. The *Astrée* of Honoré d'Urfé came to serve as a sovereign code for lovers.

The excessive luxury which had invaded the court of Henri IV., although this Prince possessed in a high degree, a taste for simplicity, could not have been unfavorable to good manners. It was the Queen, who, in spite of him gave the tone to fashion, while fashion became an auxiliary to Prostitution. When we see Gabrielle d'Estrées paying 1900 crowns (12th of November, 1594) for an embroidered handkerchief we can understand all the things her rivals might have been willing to do in order to possess handkerchiefs as rich. From this source came, undoubtedly, a multitude of secretly compromising situations which dishonored those whom coquetry and vanity impelled

*Is not *l'amour* always the chief business in life with a Frenchman?

to their ruin. Sauval relates, in the *Amours des Rois de France*, a singular anecdote which shows us the shameful traffic which the love of luxury authorized in the greatest ladies. A grand provost of the King's household, who is not named, had pursued for long a great princess, who also is not named. He had met only with disdain and refusals; but finally a bargain was struck, and it was decided that a tapestry which the lady coveted, should be the price of one night to be accorded to the grand provost of the household. The latter had the bad faith the next day to want to avoid giving the promised tapestry, "for the reason that that night had passed in such a manner, through his own fault, that he left the bed as he had entered it." The result was a contest and debate between the parties. The wife of one of the Secretaries of State was chosen as arbiter, who settled the difference by imposing the condition "that both together should put the tapestry on the back of a street porter, and that the Princess should pass one more night with this amorous but too diurnal suitor." Do we not have here one of the most hideous phases of Prostitution at a time when the bordeaux were being abolished by ordinance of the King? Henri III. fell into a wrath against Ruscelay when the latter dared to say to him, on the subject of the epidemic of 1584, "that the court was a still greater plague, which the other could not eat away" (see the *Journal de Henri III.*, under date of the 19th of October, 1584), but Henri IV. would merely have laughed, if he had read, in the *Registres-Journaux* of Pierre de l'Estoile (October, 1609), on the occasion of the uproar caused by the amours of the Prince of Joinville and the Countess of Moret, the following passage: "Those who at court are looked upon as the wisest and best advised and who penetrate most deeply the sacred mysteries of the gods (although very frequently they live as humbly as the others), would say that in this fine deed there was a covert design of the King, who had merely done to the Countess that which she had done, and that in such acts those of today are so little scrupulous at court that, as Lipsius says in his *Epistles* (I think it is the 22d): *Mores jam vocentur, nec in veniam modo veniant, sed in laudem.*"

CHAPTER XL

NEVER at any period had France been dishonored by more defilement; never had the people descended so low in the scale of dissoluteness. The fatal example of court corruption had perverted the moral sense of the nation, and the League completed the destruction of all that remained in the way of modesty among the bourgeois and plebian classes, whom the excesses, true or imputed, of Henri of Valois and his mignons had impelled to revolt against the debased royalty. It is to the *Registres-Journaux* of Pierre De l'Estoile, those faithful memoirs of the scandals of Paris for more than thirty-five years, that we must look for the frank and naïve expression, even though at times a little malicious, of the misdoings of society at the end of the 16th. century. Pierre de l'Estoile, who had lived in the time of Charles IX., does not fear to indicate the decadence of manners under Henri IV., whom he yet loved and honored as a great King. In a score of passages in his work, this genial author speaks in a grieved tone of the "whorishnesses" (*puteries*) and "lecheries" (*paillardises*), of the debauches and "other vices," which exceeded all limits, and which "were at that time more in power than ever." (See the *Journal de Henri IV.*, under date of February, 1607.) "In a century very depraved, like ours," he says elsewhere (August, 1610), "one wins the reputation of a good man very cheaply; but if only you are a bugger, parricide and atheist, you will not fail to pass for a man of honor!"

It would be difficult to conceive how pernicious was the influence of the League on manners. The people, who had reproached Henri III. and his court, with so many abominations, abominations invented or exaggerated by the partisan spirit of the Leaguers or the Huguenots, made no scruple of falling them-

selves into the same disorders, and of promenading them brazenly by the light of day. During all the time that the capital was in the power of the Sixteen, the eyes and ears of the inhabitants of the city were defiled by songs, pamphlets and obscene engravings, which always had for pretext the political policy of the Holy Alliance. "The galleries of the Palace," says d'Aubigné in his *Histoire Universelle* (Volume III., Book II., Chapter 20), "were filled with portraits of the King, trigged out like the Devil, clad in pantaloons, with the postures of Aretino or worse things than that;" for since the murder of Guise, Henri III., we are told by the commentator of the *Satyre Menippée* (edition of Ratisbonne, 1726, Volume II., page 346), "passed among the people for a monster, steeped not only in all sorts of vices and debauchery, but also in abominable sorcery." The collections of De l'Estoile are filled with the turpitudes of the Leaguers, which were by no means second to the atrocious calumnies of the Huguenots. Language was degraded and drawn through the mud of the streets; the preachers in the pulpit did not even respect the holy place, but dared there to mingle with their sermons blasphemies, impure words and disgusting images. There was not a single sermon delivered in which Béarnais was not treated as a "son of a whore" and as a *maquereau*. At a State reception to which the most considerable personages of the League came in a body to salute and harangue the Cardinal of Pelleve, one of these Leaguers, M. de Sermoise, *maître des requêtes*, having said that the King of Navarre would perhaps abjure heresy and become a Catholic, the Cardinal interrupted him wrathfully by saying: "I do not know whether you are a widower or married; but if you have been or are married, and if you had a wife who had prostituted herself in the brothel, would you care to take her back when she wanted to return? And heresy, monsieur my friend, is a whore!"

We have indicated the scandal caused among the people by the processions of the *battus*, which the King himself conducted at the head of all his court; but the people had formed a taste

for these fine processions, and as soon as the King had retired behind the Barricades, no more restraint was observed in a species of devotion which came near bordering on the most shameful sensuality. "The 30th of January, 1589," we read in the *Journal des Chases Advenues à Paris depuis le 23 Décembre 1588 jusqu'au Dernier Avril 1589* (cited by Dulaire, *Hist. de Paris*, 12-mo. edition, Volume V., page 345), "there were in the city a number of processions in which many children took part, boys as well as girls, men as well as women, all of whom were nude in their chemises, as fine a sight as one ever saw, *Dieu merci!*" There were some parishes in which as many as six or seven hundred persons wholly nude were to be seen. On the 3d of February following, there were new and "very fine" (*forte belles*) processions "in which there were a great number of persons wholly nude and carrying very handsome crosses." On the 14th. of February, there were other processions notably in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs, where there were more than a thousand persons in a state of complete nudity, notably the priests of Saint-Nicolas and their curé, François Pigenat "who was wholly nude and had nothing but a stomacher (*guilbe*) of white linen upon him." Pierre de l'Estoile, who was an eye-witness of these "fine" processions of the 14th. of February, 1589, had collected on this subject details so abominable that the folio of his original manuscript, codex 452, was destroyed by the Jesuits of Saint-Acheul, in whose hands De l'Estoile's papers remained for long. Nevertheless, there was permitted to remain a very important passage which will give us some very edifying information concerning the procession of the League. "The people," says De l'Estoile, "were so heated and enraged, if one may speak thus, after these fine processional devotions, that they would frequently rise up in the middle of the night from their beds in order to go seek the priests of their parishes to demand that they be led in procession, as they did on those days with the curé of Saint-Eustache, who was sought by some of his parishioners at night, and constrained to arise in order thus to lead them, and when he thought to make

some remonstrance, they called him a 'politician' (*politique*) and a 'heretic,' and he was constrained at last to give them their desire. And, of a truth, this good curé, with two or three others in the city of Paris, (but not more), condemned these nocturnal processions for the reason that, to speak frankly, everything there was done in carnival fashion, and men and women, girls and lads marched off pell-mell together, wholly nude, and engendered fruits other than those which had been looked for when these rites were instituted. As a matter of fact, near the Porte Montmartre, the daughter of a bonnet maker bore such fruit at the end of nine months; and a curé of Paris, who a short time before had been heard preaching on the text that the white and downy feet of women in these processions were very agreeable to God, proceeded to plant another, which came to maturity in term-time." (See the edition of MM. Champollion.)

Was not this the worst of Prostitution, covering itself thus with a mantle of holy things, and mingling brazenly in the practices of devotion? Sauval, who had misread an extract from the *Journal de Henri III.*, published in 1621 by Pierre Dupuy, disfigures it entirely in his *Mémoires Historiques et Secrets Concernant les Amours des Rois de France* (page 103, edition of 1739), where he credits Henri III. with the processions of the League and the scandals of which they were the pretext. Pierre de l'Estoile had stated that the cavalier of Aulme who "made his shrove days" (*faisoit ses jours gras*) of these processions, "was ordinarily to be found there" and even in the high streets and the churches would cast, by means of a *sarbacane*, musked comfits to the demoiselles who were by him recognized and afterward refreshed by the collations which he furnished them, sometimes upon the pont au Change, other times upon the pont Notre-Dame in the rue Saint-Jacques, la Verrerie and everywhere else; where the holy widow was not forgotten, who, covered only with a fine veil, with an opening at the throat, permitted herself to be carried once through the church of Saint-Jean, and to be flirted with and caressed to the great scandal of a number of good and devout

persons who had come in good faith to these processions." The demoiselle of Saint-Beuve, whom l'Estoile calls "the holy widow" (*la sainte veufve*) was the daughter of André de Hacqueville, first President of the grand council, and a cousin of the chevalier d'Aulme, who had made of her his mistress. This demoiselle, as remarkable for her beauty as for her light conduct, played a role indecent enough in these nocturnal processions, which served as a prelude to still more scandalous suppers. It was she who remarked, in speaking of the wives of the good royalists, "that she took a singular pleasure in seeing those damoiselles covered with mire on their way to the Bastille to sew up the breeches of their husbands." Pierre de l'Estoile would appear to have copied, almost word for word, everything which he reports concerning la Sainte-Beuve in his *Journal de Henri III.*, from a piece of the times entitled: *Conseil Salutaire d'un bon François aux Parisiens*. (Salutary Counsels of a Good Frenchman to the Parisians: see the *Mém. de la Ligue*, ancient edition, Volume III., pages 399 and following). One might also infer, from the textual analogy of the two passages, that the *Conseil Salutaire*, which was printed in the month of June, 1589, came from the pen of Pierre de l'Estoile. However this may be, the adventure of La Sainte-Beuve in the church of Saint-Jean, where "no respect was shown either for the place or for the company with respect to certain caresses," had given rise to so much scandal that the processions were not resumed. They did not make their appearance again until the 24th. of January; but the number of nude persons had diminished, and there were to be seen merely the young Jesuit collegians, who were entirely nude, to the number of three hundred. (See the *Journal des Choses Advenues à Paris*, cited by Dulaure, for the *Journals* of Pierre de l'Estoile do not even mention this last procession.)

The Leaguers, who had made so much noise about the dissolute manners of the court, themselves set an example of the most shameless debauchery; "today," wrote the honest De l'Estoile, in April, 1589, "to play the brigand with his neighbor, to massacre

those nearest him, to rob altars, profane churches, violate women and girls and ransack all the world is the ordinary exercise of a Leaguer and the infallible mark of a zealous Catholic." The author of the *Conseil Salulaire d'un bon François aux Parisiens* merely repeats, almost in the same terms, this implication of Pierre de l'Estoile against the heroes of the League: "Violations of women and girls of all ages," he says, "even in the holy temples and sacrileges at the altars, all that is but sport for them; that is prowess and gallantry; that is essentially the form of a good Leaguer." The majority of the details relative to the excesses of all sorts committed by the Leaguers are to be found at once in the *Conseil Salulaire* and in the *Journal de Henri III.*, as though these two works had been prepared by the same hand. When the Duke of Mayenne, at the head of an army of the Alliance, invaded the suburbs of Tours and threatened that city (Monday, 8th. of May, 1589,) "there were found some forty or fifty women as well as girls, hidden in a cave, all of whom were violated, as was done throughout the rest of this *faubourg*; and even in the church, some women and girls, who had taken refuge there as in a place of surety, were forced in the presence of their husbands and of their fathers and mothers, whom these executioners compelled to assist at this spectacle in order to add to the outrage. I saw the following day," adds the author of the *Conseil Salulaire*, "the beds which were still in the square, where the vicar told me he had seen women and girls drawn and thrown by their hair." When the cavalier of Aulme, cousin of the Duke of Mayenne, was pillaging the neighborhood of Paris, where he had his general headquarters, "he entered into houses, where he found only a few ladies and demoiselles, women of honor and of virtue, whom, in the absence of their husbands, gentlemen of good heart and quality, he took by force; and after having violated them, he abandoned them to his soldiers." In those unhappy times, the soldiers, to whatever side they happened to belong, whether they were Huguenots or Catholics, Leaguers or Royalists, regarded as the best part of their spoils the women and girls who were to

be found in a captured city, and it was practically impossible to prevent them from practicing horrible violence upon the unfortunate ones who might fall into their hands. Frequently, in the space of a few days, a city or a village would pass alternately into the hands of two belligerent parties, and each occupation of the place would lead to new *violemens*; so that the inhabitants merely changed executioners. The royal army, which in 1589 occupied the villages neighboring Paris in order to complete the blockade of the capital, had perhaps equalled the army of the League in the matter of atrocious *forceneries*. In the *Discours Véritable de l'Estrange et Subite Mort de Henry de Valois* (Troyes, Jean Moreau, 1589, in-8), the author, who calls himself a religious of the order of Jacobins, accuses the King of spreading "the vomit of his wrath" (*le vomissement de sa rage*) in all the cities, such as Pointoise, Poissy, Étampes, Saint-Cloud, etc., which he had invaded with his soldiery. "The girls, even those of young age," he says again, "and the religious, have been violated, even forced." Five years later, when the Duke of Mayenne desired to have his army under the walls of Paris in order to be ready to sustain a siege and even to give battle, (December, 1693), De l'Estoile tells us that "the suburbs of Paris were filled with soldiers who there committed a thousand villainies and insolences, even forcing old women, and girls of ten years and up, from which resulted many complaints but no punishment."

The tribunals were powerless against the soldiery, who owed their impunity to the complicity of their leaders, and who, moreover, would have treated judges and judicial agents with as little regard as they did the good folk whom they molested to suit their fancy. But where there was something more than martial law, and where the civil authority had resumed its rights, the acts of violence which were committed among the people and which reached the attention of the magistrates, were promptly and severely punished. It cannot be denied that the example of the abominable excesses of the soldiery had frequently exerted the most corrupting influence over perverse natures, who felt that

they were authorized, in times of peace as of war, to yield to their brutal passions. Thus, rape was one of the most frequent crimes of this period, and it sometimes borrowed from circumstances a particularly ferocious character. This crime, the fact must be recognized, was never less rare than since the closing of the houses of debauchery and the abolition of legal Prostitution. It was necessary for the Parliament of Paris to redouble its efforts and its vigor in order to diminish the number of assaults on women and especially on children. "On Tuesday, the 23d. of December, 1603," we read in the *Journals* of Pierre de l'Estoile, "there was hanged *en Grève* the servant maid of one Depras, an usher of the fifth chamber of inquiries, for having sold and delivered into the hands of a certain young man, a very beautiful girl of her house, aged only from nine to ten years, whom this miserable wretch, being her guardian, had villainously forced and ruined, to the great displeasure and regret of the said Depras, her father, and of all her relatives." But there is no evidence that the author of the rape was discovered and punished. Justice, in such a case, showed no indulgence to the quality of the persons involved, for, in 1607, a notary of Paris named de Nesmes, "having unfortunately forced a little girl of the age of five or six years, daughter of Dufresnoy, the apothecary, had taken refuge in Flanders, where he believed himself free from criminal pursuit." His extradition was obtained by the King, spurred on to seek punishment of the culprit by the "enormity" of the crime. This notary, subjected to an ordinary and extraordinary examination, steadfastly refused to admit his guilt and since he was accused by but a single witness, he could only be condemned to banishment. During the horrible tortures to which he was subjected, he never ceased to protest his innocence. "Ah! Would to God," exclaimed the counsellor Faideau, who conducted the interrogation, "I would to God that you were as innocent of all sin, as I am assured that you are guilty of this act, being certain that none other than you has committed it! But you have a good gab (*bec*), which stands you in good stead!" Rapes of this sort oc-

curred incessantly in Paris, but they did not all come to light, for the relatives of the victim would frequently consent not to lodge a complaint, in view of the payment of a sum of silver, becoming thus accomplices of the attack which had been made on the person of the child. Pierre de l'Estoile informs us that in the month of August, 1607, "there was made a prisoner at Paris and sent to the prisons of the Abbaye the prior of the *Fratti ignorant*, for having forced a little girl aged only five years and a half, daughter of a *courroyeur* of the suburb of Saint-Germain-des-Pres;" but he does not tell us that this wretch paid the penalty for his crime. When the complaining party, appeased by the payment of money, would abandon the cause and declare himself satisfied, Parliament would sometimes drop the affair in order to avoid scandal.

On the other hand, there was one abominable crime which obtained neither grace nor mercy, when denounced by public rumor to the tribunals: That was the crime of bestiality, the penalty for which was fixed at 90 tournoys, 12 ducats, and 6 carlins in the book of Taxes of the court of Rome; it always carried with it the death penalty in France, yet this strange crime, which should have disappeared with barbarism, seemed, on the contrary, to multiply at the end of the sixteenth century. Jurisprudence was the same with regard to this monstrous madness in all the parliaments of France: the man or woman who was guilty was burned along with the beast. Claude Lebrun de la Rochette, learned juriconsult, in his work entitled: *Les Procez Civil et Criminel* (Rouen, Jacq. Hollant, 1647, quarto), sets forth thus the motives for the condemnation and punishment of the beast: "These animals are not punished thus for any fault of their own, but for having been the instruments of so execrable a crime, by reason of which the life of a reasoning person is taken away; being a thing unworthy of the view of man, after so signal a wickedness, and because the animal will always revive the memory of the act, which should be suppressed and abolished as much as possible; and this is why the sovereign courts most frequently order

that the records of the trial of such delinquents be burned with them, in order, to extinguish the memory of everything with them." These sage precautions, the frightful concomitants of punishment, the horror which every where attached to the "damnable and brutal cohabitation of man or woman with a brute beast," the inflexible rigor of the indignant magistrates—all were still powerless to prevent this crime from spreading, not only in the country, but also in the cities. In the *Comtes* of the provost of Paris, collected at the end of the *Antiquités* of that city by Sauval (Volume III., page 387), we find curious details concerning the execution of one Gillet Soulart, who was burned at Corbeil with a sow in 1465. Dulaure, in his *Histoire de Paris* (Volume IV, 12 mo edition, page 563), audaciously advances the theory that this Soulart was a priest; but this assertion is by no means justified by the extract on which Dulaure bases it. There it is stated merely that Gillet Soulart was executed "for his demerits," and that the expenses of the execution amounted to 9 pounds, 16 sols and 4 Parisian deniers, that is to say: 22 sols, "for having borne the trial of the said Gillet in the city of Paris and for having had him seen and visited by Counsel;" 2 sols "for three pints of wine which were brought to the scaffold for those who dug the trenches for the gibbet and the sow;" two sols, "for the gibbet (*attacat*) of 14 feet long or thereabouts;" 6 pounds, 12 deniers to Henriet Cousin, executioner of high justice, "for two trips which he made to the city of Corbeil;" 2 sols, 1 denier "for three pints of wine which were brought to the Court for the said Henriet and Soulart, with a loaf of bread;" 7 sols, 4 deniers, for the nourishment of the said sow and for having guarded her for the space of eleven days, at the price of 8 Parisian deniers for each day;" 40 Parisian sols to Robinet and Henriet, called the brothers Fouquiers, "for five hundred faggots picked up at the port of Morsant and brought to the Court of Corbeil."

Dulaure, who had sought analogous documents in the manuscript criminal archives of Tournelle, cites two other punishments for the crime of bestiality, from codices 84 and 105. Guyot

Vuide was hanged and burned on the 26th of May, 1546, "for cohabitation with a cow which was clubbed before the execution." Jeanne la Soille was also burned alive on the 5th of January, 1556, with a she ass, which was also clubbed, *par faveur*, before being cast upon the pyre. Pierre de l'Estoile cites but a single execution of this sort in the *Journal de Henri III*; but he reports a number which took place under the reign of Henri IV. We may conclude from this that the policing of manners was conducted at that time with more care, and that the tribunals, including so many enlightened and respectable men, had taken upon themselves the task of correcting the depravation of the century. "Sometime before," wrote Pierre de l'Estoile in the month of August, 1607, "there was committed a prodigious act, surpassing in abomination all preceding ones; which was that of a man who, having had the company of a mare, had had by her two children; for which abomination, having been condemned to be burned alive along with his mare, upon being summoned to Paris, the sentence was confirmed by decree of Parliament, and he was sent back to his own country to be executed, and as to the two children, it was ordained that the Sorbonne should be assembled to decide what was to be done with them." De l'Estoile had unfortunately neglected to record the sentence of the Sorbonne, and we do not know whether these two infants were burned with the infamous father or not. We are forced, however, to doubt, not the good faith of the chronicler, but the reality of the extraordinary fact which he has reported in his journals. A little further on, under date of the month of November of the same year, he writes in his journal: "a young lad condemned in this month at La Tournelle to be hanged and strangled for having had copulation with a mare, the mare being clubbed at the foot of the scaffold." Different decrees relating to the same crime have been cited by French criminologists, notably by Papon in his *Recueil d'Arrests Notables du Cours Souveraines de France*. Lebrun de la Rochette, who prepared his treatise on the *Procès Criminel* in the time of Henri IV. reports a decree of the Parlia-

ment of Paris, rendered on the 15th of December, 1601, "against Claudine de Culam, native of Rozay in Brie, accused and convicted of having committed this brutality with a dog, was hanged, strangled and afterward burned with the dog. This decree is reported by M. Chenue, and the past year, 1609, by decree of the Parliament of Dombes, there was executed in the city of Trevois a villager convicted of intercourse with a cow."

The frequency of these frightful trials and the not less horrible executions that followed, we like to repeat, show that the French magistrates, frightened by the corruption of manners, were laboring unceasingly to remedy them by inspiring a salutary terror in the debauchees and in all enemies of public morality. Thus while it was well enough for those guilty of sodomy and the hideous crimes attaching to it to boast of their impunity at court, they were still pursued with an extreme rigor, when they fell under the notice of civil or ecclesiastical justice. It would seem that, during the reign of Henri III. and his mignons, the death penalty was not applied to a crime which had taken shelter, so to speak, in the shadow of the throne. Thus, Pierre de l'Estoile relates under date of the 30th of January, 1586, that a Piedmontese physician married at Abbeyville and named De Sylva, had been a prisoner for more than a year at the Conciergerie "from cause of sodomy, with which he was charged by his wife herself," when he assassinated one of his prison comrades at the jailor's table. This madman, locked up in a dungeon, strangled himself swallowing "pellets" (*pelotes*) made with the shreds of his shirt; his cadaver underwent the punishment which his crimes had merited: it was drawn by the tail of a horse through the streets of Paris to the sewer, where it was hung up by the feet. In the *Remonstrances Très-Humbles au Roy de France et de Pologne*, published in 1588, the author who was a good Royalist rather than a Leaguer, cried out with bitterness: "Shall I speak of the sodomies which are commonly committed?" It was Henri IV. who enjoined Parliament to show no pity toward such turpitudes and who restored the ancient penalty to force. "On Tuesday, the 12th. of November,

1596," says De l'Estoile, "there were burned at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, two sodomites who had vilified and ruined two pages of M. le Prince." This odious vice, despite the example of courtiers, had made little progress among the people, who looked upon it as an honor to be free of what they always referred to as Italian defilement. Henri IV., notwithstanding the striking reprobation with which he branded these shameful misdemeanors, still could not succeed in purging his court of them. "Sodomy, which is the abomination of abominations," wrote De l'Estoile in 1607, "still reigns there to such a degree that it is best to keep one's hands in one's trousers. . . . God has given us a Prince quite unlike Nero, that is to say, one good, just, virtuous and God-fearing, and one, who naturally abhors this abomination. But this Prince does not find any in his court, either cardinal, bishop, almoner, confessor, priest, or Jesuit, who even open their mouths (though that is their proper duty) to speak and remonstrate somewhat with His Majesty, from fear that they may incur the bad grace and malevolence of a few great ones, who are called the 'Gods of the court.'" The evil became still more aggravated under the following reign and no more efficacious remedies were found for it, but the body of the nation, protected by a noble feeling for human dignity, did not become so degraded as to give itself to this deplorable species of Prostitution.

The laws destined to safeguard manners and to punish all forms of fornication were very rigorous, but they were not always applied in equal measure. Some of them even attained the point of atrocity, leaving it to the judge to decide the penalty in view of circumstances which might be alleged for or against the accused. Thus, rape and seduction might be punished by death, even though the guilty party offered to atone for his crime by marriage. In 1583, the Parliament of Paris condemned to the gallows a clerk of the palace who had rendered pregnant the daughter of a president of the *enquêtes*, even though this girl, aged twenty-five years, declared herself willing to marry her seducer. (See the *Arrests Notables of la Rocheflavin*, Book III.,

page 293.) *A maître des comptes* whom Pierre de l'Estoile does not name, merely saying that he was of the city of Rennes in Brittany, was condemned to marry a widow, to whom he had given a child under promise of marriage. "It was stated in the terms of the decree (which is a very remarkable thing) that he should marry her at once, or, failing to do so, that at two o'clock of the afternoon, he should have his head cut off, which thing he was constrained to do, and they were married that morning (18th of September, 1604), in the church of Saint-Bartélmy, at eleven o'clock." The President, Mole, pronounced the decree in these words: "either you shall die, or you shall wed, such is the will and resolution of this court."

It was principally in trials of this sort that justice showed itself sometimes too accessible to influences of various kinds. The credit of a great lord could frequently cause the scales to rise or fall on the score of a vengeance, a lechery or some other interest. In causes having to do with the policing of manners, Prostitution too frequently served to motivate the sentence of the judges, who would look with complacency on some powerful person, or who would secretly obey their own immodest passions. Pierre de l'Estoile cites a saddening example of these miscarriages of justice. He saw at the Conciergerie in 1609, a poor woman, who, for more than twelve years, had prosecuted futilely in all the courts, the corrupter and the assassin of her daughter. This daughter was not more than five years old when she had been violated by a man to whose care the mother had entrusted her. The unhappy little creature, who was found to have been "ruined by the syphilis" (*gâtée de la grosse vérole*) had afterwards died of it in the hands of the barbers and surgeons. Not only was the desolated mother unable to obtain the punishment of the infamous author of the rape, but she herself was condemned to be flogged, as guilty of neglect with regard to the innocent victim, and she was refused all pecuniary indemnification for the wrong which had been done her in the loss of the child. What was more, the counsellor, Baron, who made a report in this case, did not hesi-

tate to say that it was the mother herself "who, with her finger, or with some bolt (*cheville*), had ruined and corrupted her daughter, and also that with such instruments the syphilis or chancres (*poulains*) cannot be conveyed, as appears by the reports of the surgeons and matrons, dated the 24th of July, 1599." De l'Estoile, who had come upon a copy of this report, preserved it as he said, "as a memorial to the good justice of our century!"

Pierre de l'Estoile has preserved in his *Journals* a still more remarkable instance of the judicial prevarications of his time. It is a precious document, and one to be added to that chapter in which we have treated of Prostitution in the confessional: "On Wednesday, the 8th of July, 1609, there was hanged and strangled, in the Place de Grève, at Paris, a true rascal, named Lanoue, pimp by profession, who had espoused a lass, and who was convicted of incest with the sister of his wife, with whom he ordinarily slept, and who was herself a lass who deserved to share the other end of the scaffold with her brother-in-law, but she was quit with being condemned to banishment and to the lash, which she had at the foot of the scaffold. It was said that M. the President of Jambeville, moved by her beauty and extreme youth, since she was not more than fifteen or sixteen years old, had been the cause of saving her life, the judges nearly all having been in favor of death. And it is to be noted that as soon as she was free, she was placed in a carriage which was waiting and which had been sent expressly for her, since women of her quality (even at the present time) are never lacking in favor and good acquaintance." The carriage which came to take this woman from the hands of the executioner had undoubtedly been sent by the President of Jambeville, to whom the fustigated beauty owed her life. This magistrate, whose great rigor and firmness Mézeray praises (*Abr. Chronol. de l'Histoire de France*, in April, 1602), had won distinction by the terrible executions which he sanctioned against women of evil life. It was he who remarked to President Séguier, in speaking of the mystic writings of Saint Theresa, which had begun to be translated and pub-

lished in France: "You and I have caused to be lashed fifty *maquerelles* at Paris who did not deserve it so well as this Mother Theresa of whom they speak so highly!" (See the *Journal de Henri IV.*, under 30th of July, 1608.)

The Parliament of Paris, which did not pardon the vile purveyors of Prostitution, and which punished very gravely all excitations to debauchery, appeared, however, to wink at bad books and obscene engravings, which were publicly sold, even in the galleries of the palace. Never, at any epoch, had the pen and the crayon been more licentious, and yet all this resulted in not the least prosecution of the authors, artists, printers and colporteurs. Each one had the right to publish, without restriction, all the smut, written or depicted, which could possibly outrage modesty and defile the imagination, provided that in these *salauderies* and these *fadèses*, as they were called, there was not the faintest touch of heresy or atheism. One would have said that the morality and decency of good folk could not be offended by immoralities and indecencies in literature and in art; thus there were to be seen exposed in the shops of the print merchants the Figures of Aretino, and in the book stores, the obscene poems of Signognes, of Morin, of Théophile, etc., which were later collected in volumes under the titles of *La Muse*, *Folâtre*, *Muses Gaillardes*, *Cabinet Satyrique*, etc. The genial Pierre de l'Estoile does not blush to jot down this note in his *Journals*: "On Tuesday, the 19th of August, 1608, I have bought for 60 sols some little portraitures and new Figures of Aretino, made by Tempeste at Rome, villainous, filthy and immodest beyond measure, which commonly pass here under the name of the Loves of the Gods. There were fourteen of them, which everybody found well made, although there can be no such thing as good where evil is concerned, and I have changed them at D. L. N., with great regret, since I take them as an indication of the virtue of this modesty century." De l'Estoile collects also, with a furious curiosity, all the smuttily facetious pieces in prose and in verse which were freely printed at this time, and which were sold in the streets and public places, notably in the

Place de Dauphine, which was constructed shortly after. The police paid no attention to these innumerable pieces of transient nature, filled with ordures and joyous equivocations, which were the delight of the lower classes as they were of the great lords. Two or three mad libertines, like the Comte de Permission and Maitre Guillaume, were permitted to wander throughout the city, offering to passers-by for a few sous certain booklets of their own composition, containing infamous engravings and intolerable blackguardisms. The sale of these booklets was considerable, and no one found any fault; the purchased volume was tossed into the fire as soon as one had laughingly leafed through it.

We meet, nevertheless, in the *Journals* of De l'Estoile, with one case of a book's being seized, that of the treatise of Sanchez, *De Matrimonio*, which an ordinance of Parliament placed on the index in 1607, "for being an abominable book, and the reading of it being evil and pernicious." De l'Estoile happened to be in the book shop of Adrien Perrier when the police commissioner Langois came there "to forbid him to expose or sell in the future to any person whatsoever" that great folio which had been printed and reprinted openly, and which was sold everywhere until there was discovered at the end of the work a complete doctrine of sodomy. De l'Estoile, who hastened to purchase the forbidden book, avows that the Jesuit, Sanchez there "treats exquisitely of that fine art of sodomy, but so villainously, and so abominably that the very paper on which I write blushes; moreover he is a man who appears to have greatly practiced the trade." This book of Sanchez would not have been forbidden, despite all it contained, if the author had been a friar or a Capuchin rather than a Jesuit. But in all the books published by the Jesuits, a search was made for some maxim dangerous to the lives and authority of kings. There was a general distrust of the congregation of Jesus, its doctrines and its writings. Thus, De l'Estoile, who had bought the great volume of Sanchez, bound in parchment, for eight francs, "because I love the Jesuits," as he sardonically adds, justifies his purchase by saying that he wished to have this book "not because

the subject pleases me, but to be able to testify more and more to the good life and sane doctrines of these new prophets through their own writings, which I have collected from the same source, and which I have piled up with the others, and which will be found collected there in goodly number." At the very moment when the Parliament and the Sorbonne were causing the work of Sanchez to be seized at Paris, the third or fourth edition was being printed of the *Somme des Péchez et le Remède d'Iceux* of the Breton friar, Jean Benedicti, which had appeared at Lyons in 1584, and which had not in the least disturbed the scruples of the Church or the magistrates. This mystical treatise, which the author had had the impertinence to dedicate to the holy Virgin, contained, nevertheless, more infamous filth than did the treatise *De Matrimonio*. It is true that Père Benedicti, in his immodest lucubration, showed himself less indulgent than had Sanchez toward sodomy, for he classes with the seven mortal sins the case of a husband who so conducts himself towards his wife, a practice which the Jewish rabbis endeavored to authorize in these terms, which we borrow from the Latin translation, for the friar's French, according to Brantôme, who himself was scandalized at it, "sounds very badly to chaste and honest ears:" *Duabus mulieribus apud synagogam conquestis se fuisse a viris suis cognitu sodomico cognitis, responsum est ab illis rabbinis: Virum esse uxoris dominum, proinde posse uti ejus utcunque libuerit, non aliter quam is qui piscem emit: ille enim tam anterioribus quam posteriobus partibus, ad arbitrium vesci potest.* The majority of confessional guides and canonical treatises on cases of conscience were no more timorous than the *Sodome des Péchés* of Père Benedicti and good Catholics did not think of taking offense at them.

The carelessness of the magistrates with respect to obscene books had produced a deluge of books of this sort, which were scattered in profusion, not only in Paris, but also throughout the provinces. The presses at Rouen, Lyons, Poitiers and a number of other cities did not cease to vomit forth a multitude of filthy and licentious pleasantries, which the packmen, or the *bisouards*

and merchants carried even into the depths of the most remote hamlets. These monuments of old French gaiety exercised an unfortunate influence over French manners, all the more so because they passed from hand to hand without distinction of age or sex. The police saw no cause for action in the matter, so long as religion and royalty were not affected in their fundamental principles. One of these joyous works, the most famous of all, *Le Moyen de parvenir*, which saw the light about 1609 or 1610, ran through two or three almost simultaneous editions, and despite the audacity of many heretical propositions which smelled of the fagot, this collection of *contes gaillards* and brazen *gaudrioles* was not suppressed by the ecclesiastical censorship nor by ordinance of the King nor by act of Parliament; the author, Beroalde de Verville, who, although Canon of Tours, had always possessed a secret sympathy for the Reformation and for reformers, was not even disturbed; he had not put his name upon the title page of his *Moyen de Parvenir*, but the name of the author was well known, and the canonical chapter, of which Beroalde was a member saw no need of denouncing to the Archbishop of Tours this libertine who had been inspired by the writings of Rabelais, and who had even, it was said, made profit out of an unpublished work of *Maître François*. Certainly, the *Moyen de Parvenir*, that "fine collection of authentic mysteries" is not less bold than the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel*; it is, also, a good deal dirtier, a good deal more cynical, and yet it did not arouse the ire of the Sorbonne nor of Parliament. It was the blackguardisms and the filthy passages in it which saved the author, whereas both would have been burned if the age had been one less given to sorry jests, to satires and to *contes gras*. These tales, in which monks and nuns played the ordinary rôle attributed to them by popular malice since the beginning of convents, were not, we must recognize the fact, any more strange or more scandalous than the deeds which took place every day under the eyes of the readers of the *Moyen de Parvenir*, and so, Pierre de l'Estoile, who prides himself on writing contemporary history, and who merely sets down

curiously the rumors of the city and the court, reports in his *Journal*, in February, 1610, an adventure which Beroalde might have inserted, without changing a word in his joyous *Moyen de Parvenir*: "A good lady of this city, who a short while before had taken her place among the *Filles Repentes*, said and confessed these past days, to a friend of mine who went to see her, that from the second night she had entered there she had had the company of a priest, who had slept between another penitent and herself, and that they did not rebel at such duties as these, provided they were rendered to priests and those of the church: which is the reason they are called the 'consecrated ones' (*consacrés*). The same one told me that a man of quality of this city had frequently wished to debauch him by leading him into such a community of women, telling him that he might there enjoy himself at his ease and sleep with whom he pleased, even at Longchamp and at Gif, more freely than in the most celebrated bordeau of the city of Paris."

Although De l'Estoile put faith in the statements of his friend, whom he had always known as "a God-fearing man" we may still brand as exaggeration this tale which reposes only on hearsay. It is certain, however, that the "*religions de femmes*" were so relaxed at this period, that it became necessary to reform the majority of them in the course of the seventeenth century. This relaxation and the disorders which were its natural consequence, dated back to the civil wars, and especially to the League, when the convents constantly had to lodge soldiers and sometimes had to undergo the sorry fate of a city taken by assault; but ordinarily, the Leaguers entered into a bargain with the religious, and the latter offered to the soldiers of the Holy Alliance a hospitality that was wholly fraternal; the abbess or prioress would set the example to her nuns, and provided she was not too old and ugly, she herself would soon be on good terms with the leader of the band. Followed then banquets, songs and orgies, which kept up as long as the household of the daughters of the Lord were furnished with a garrison. When the time came to separate after

this gay life, the gentlemen would remount their horses to go seek the enemy, while the sisters would then find time to return to their religious duties and the rule of the community. Then, the following day perhaps another troop, of Catholics this time, would pass by, and the convent would receive its new guests with the same fervor and the same urbanity. We have seen how Henri IV. and his officers had established themselves, with all the rights of war, in the abbeys of Maubuisson, of Longchamp and of Montmartre. We can understand how the habit of living with soldiers had terribly compromised monastic chastity. The religious had become so thoroughly accustomed to this voluptuous and worldly existence that they did not fear to break their vows and to quit the cloistral regime. While Paris was in the power of the League, in 1593, "nothing else was to be seen at the palace and everywhere," says Pierre de l'Estoile, "but gentlemen and religious coupled together and making love." These shameless religious, who promenaded with their lovers in the public places, "as villainous and disorderly in words as all the rest," wore under their veils, which they had reserved as the sole index to their profession, "the true habits of whores and courtezans, being rouged, musked and powdered." The preachers thundered in vain against this scandal, and Pierre Commolet, who acted like a madman in the pulpit when he came to refer to these unfortunate sinners as "*vilaines*" and "*putains*," called their accomplices, "villainous ruffians" (*vilains ruffiens*) and "buffoons," crying out in a loud voice that the people ought to stone them and throw mud in their faces, as they did women of evil life and those vile debauchees who dared to show themselves by the light of day outside the dens of Prostitution.

CHAPTER XLI

THE ordinance of 1560, which had pronounced "the abolition of the bordeaux" continued in force, although it was not very exactly carried out; but from time to time, a series of rigorous measures against Prostitution and its despicable agents proved strikingly that the principle of the prohibitive law was not readily to be abandoned by the magistrates, who believed public morality to be interested in the enforcement of such a law. Nevertheless, the system of absolute prohibition regarding places of debauchery had produced effects altogether as deplorable as those attributed to these retreats. The number of lost women had not diminished; one might even affirm that it had increased; the great and ancient bordeaux had been suppressed, but a throng of others, hidden in the shadows or disguised under appearances less suspect, had been secretly established at the expense of the old fiefs of Prostitution; which could claim an existence recognized and patent. It may readily be conceived that these *cagnards*, as they were then called, were no longer under the eye and hand of the municipal administration, but had become infamous houses and horrible cut throat resorts, where those unfortunate ones who permitted themselves to be lured there, frequently lost their purses, their cloaks, and even their lives. As to their health, there was not even a doubt as to this, and the venereal malady, the most horrible and the most incurable ever known, stalked day and night in these holes. There were many daughters of joy who were flogged, branded and shorn and subjected to perpetual banishment; there were maquernelles who were promenaded upon an ass, placed in the pillory and condemned to a fine; there were ruffians and *berlandiers* who were fustigated, imprisoned and sent to the galleys; but the punishment inflicted upon one did not render another more wise and, despite the efforts to conjure the

scourge of Prostitution, it incessantly extended its ravages and its defilements in the bosoms of cities, appearing, like the plague, to take pleasure in braving all the efforts of human foresight and wisdom.

The facts were all too much in favor of the necessity of establishing legal Prostitution in order to escape free and secret Prostitution. Legislators recoiled before this scandalous necessity, not daring to touch the ordinance of Charles IX; but at the same time, as we have already said, while all the while maintaining the principle of the law, they did not refuse to bend it to the point of "tolerating" the *bordeaux*. We do not know at what period this tolerance was admitted into local police regulations. It may be supposed, however, that it was in force in Paris under the reign of Henri III. We find, in the writings of the end of the sixteenth century, formal mention of certain *bordeaux*, which were so notorious that they could not have existed without the tacit authorization of the provost and of the Châtelet of Paris. Pierre de l'Estoile, in a passage of his *Journals*, which we have cited above, makes allusion to "the most celebrated *bordeau*" of the capital, but he does not name it. We do not know, therefore, in what places "tolerated" Prostitution had its elected domicile, but we are disposed to believe that the streets and squares which had been affected by it in the past as a special privilege gradually fell back into a similar servitude. And yet, these bad places, the number of which had been well restricted, and which were subjected to certain conditions of interior surveillance, were no longer sufficient to the shameful passions and the irruptions of lubricity; Prostitution, in place of confining itself to the narrow space which had been accorded it, in place of accepting the occult patronage of the Parisian police, no longer knew any limits, but invaded all streets, all quarters and all houses of the city. It possessed, above all, contagious centers in the Courts of Miracles, where it set up for itself an asylum inaccessible to the law; it was there that vice might with impunity brave public modesty;

it was there that crime might wash its bloody hands in the mud of debauchery.

The abolition of the *bordeaux* was not wholly without blame for this deplorable state of things; many enlightened and pious men thought as much, but were careful not to say so. Michel de Montaigne, who was in the habit of saying everything, still has not dared to give us his opinion on this serious question of morality and public police; but we may presume that his advice would have been conformable to that which he attributes to "some" (*aucuns*), in the following passage of his *Essays*, published for the first time in 1580 (*Bordeaux*, 2 volumes, octavo): "That which we call 'decency,'" he says (Book II, Chapter 12), "which consists in not doing openly that which it is decent to do under cover, they (the stoics) call 'stupidity' (*sottise*); and to be mincing and to disavow that which nature, custom and our desire publish and proclaim of our actions, they esteem it vice: and it would seem to them that it would insult the mysteries of Venus to expose them to the public and to draw these sports beyond the curtain is to vilify them: the thing of weight is shame, concealment, reservation, circumscription, all parties to esteem: pleasure very ingeniously lends itself to this, under the mask of virtue, in order not to be prostituted at street corners, trampled under foot and given over to the sight of common eyes, having something to say there respecting the dignity and convenience of its accustomed closets. Wherefore, some say that to do away with the public brothels is not only to spread lechery everywhere, which would otherwise have been assigned to that place, but is also to sharpen vagabond and idle men to this vice through uneasiness." Montaigne, as an ancient member of the Parliament of Bordeaux, was not in a position to pronounce openly against the law, which was looked upon as one of the most excellent to be found in French jurisprudence, and which was every day applied at some point of the realm; but he possessed too lofty, too politic and too philosophic a view not to deplore a remedy which was worse than the evil.

It was not, therefore, he who lifted his voice to plead the cause of legal Prostitution in the interest of public manners and to demand the reestablishment of the ancient privileges of debauchery. It was, it is said, a learned minister of the reformed religion, Pierre Victor Palma Cayet, who judged it useful to give vice a circumscribed and limited domain under the idea that it might there exhaust its poison without infecting the sane portion of the population. Cayet, born of poor parents at Montrichard in Touraine, had acquired very extended knowledge in all the sciences, even those which were commonly looked upon as occult and diabolic; he had studied magic and boasted of being able to communicate with the Devil, who had given him the gift of languages. His immense learning, rather than his demonomania, had caused him to be attached as preacher to the house of the Princess Catherine of Navarre. He had already composed a number of works on magic, religious polemics and history, when he conceived the idea of posing as a reformer of manners and of publishing a *Discourse Contenant le Remède Contre les Dissolutions Publiques, Présenté â Messieurs du Parlement*. This Discourse was, according to him, merely a translation or paraphrase of an Italian work printed fifteen or twenty years before under this title: *Discourse del Remedio delle Publiche Dissolutioni*, published under the name of the celebrated Nicolo Perroto, Archbishop of Siponto. It is probable that Cayet had not been content with translating his author, but that he had put much of himself into this apology for legal Prostitution. It had been asserted that Cayet was leading then a very debauched life and "that he had betaken himself not very decently to the place of a damoiselle." This accusation, formulated by Coloniés, in his *Gallia Orientalis* (page 144), has no direct relation to the project which the preacher of Madame Catherine then cherished with regard to making himself the restorer of the bordeaux. The memory of his past life merely gave rise to certain economic, moral and pornographic considerations; which were none too in harmony with the character and garb of the author. He dwelt, it was said,

in a wine shop of the rue la Huchette, which is described as a "known bordeau" (*bordeau signalé*) in the *Mémoires de la Ligue* (ancient edition, Volume VI, page 347), and he remained there for more than three months with a famous magician who was called the "judge of Coudon." This was in the course of the year 1595, and from this time on, the reformers suspected Cayet of planning, from ambitious calculations, to be converted to Catholicism. Cayet, having completed his book on the bad houses and on the necessity of establishing them under well policed conditions, caused it to be copied by his scribe and added to it in his own hand a number of Greek and Latin notes; this manuscript, thus prepared for publication, was confided to a Protestant printer, Robert Estienne, who would appear to have hesitated about putting it upon the press, and who consulted a common friend. It has been supposed that this friend must have been Pierre de l'Estoile, with whom Cayet had formed more intimate relations (*société plus étroite*) than with anyone else. The result was that the manuscript was stolen from the hands of the printer and that Cayet was accused of libertinism before a consistory of reformed ministers, who heard witnesses, interrogated the accused and condemned him as the author of an execrable book, although Cayet energetically maintained that this book, which he had the right to possess in his study (*étude*), was "filled" with good remedies against incontinence. He indulged in lively reproaches directed against Robert Estienne for having betrayed him. "Monsieur, I have not betrayed you," replied the printer, "I was surprised by another whom I esteemed as another self. I never said that you were the author, and I confess to you that I promised never to reveal it to anyone." (*Chronologie Novennaire*, by Palma Cayet, under the year 1595.)

Cayet, who was solemnly deposed by the consistory, declared upon the spot that he thereby joined the Catholic and Roman religion and quitted the service of the King's sister. The treatise "on the establishment of the bordeaux" was not printed, and the evangelic ministers who possessed the original manuscript held it

as a permanent threat over the head of the writer, who thereupon became a doctor in the faculty of theology and abandoned his studies in the occult sciences. There was a popular assurance to the effect that he had sold himself to the Devil, and that he had signed with his own blood a contract with the Prince of Darkness. The Protestants, it is true, pursued him with threats, satires and calumnies, in which the detestable volume always bobbed up, a volume which no one had seen except the printer, Robert Estienne, Pierre de l'Estoile and the members of the Consistory. Following is the manner in which De l'Estoile, who was suspected of being the author of this book, speaks of it in his *Journal*. "In this very time, and at the end of the year (1595), a minister of Madame named Pierre Victor Cayet, abjured the religion and quitted the ministry in order to become a Roman Catholic presbyter; he consumed many reams of paper against the ministers, his companions, who accused him of having commenced his conversion in the brothel, for they produced a book which he had written on the permission and tolerance of the bordeaux, on which subject the following quatrain was composed:

*Cayet, se voulant faire prebstre,
A monsté qu'il a bon cerveau;
Car il veult, avent que de l'estre,
Faire restablir le bordeau.**

This passage gives us to understand that Pierre de l'Estoile knew this book, and that copies of it had been struck off, but Cayet never avowed that the work was truly his, which permits us to assume that he blushed for having written it. Agrippa d'Aubigné, who could not pardon Cayet for his apostacy, thus relates the motives in his *Histoire Universelle* (Volume III., Book IV., Chapter 41): "It happened also that Cayet, working at magic,

*Cayet, desiring to be a priest,
Doth a very good head show;
Since before he turns, at least,
He'd reestablish the bordeau.

some time afterwards was deposed, being also accused of having composed two books, the one, to prove that by the sixth commandment neither fornications nor adultery were forbidden, but only the sin of Onan (*sola masturbatio inhibita*); the other was to prove the necessity of reestablishing everywhere the bordeaux. D'Aubigné was tireless in vilifying Cayet on the subject of these two works, which in reality constituted but a single work, according to the notes of the author of the *Confession de Sancy*, (page 58 of the edition published by Leduchat in 1744, following the *Journal de Henri III*). But in the *Confession de Sancy*, d'Aubigné recurs to the two books with a persistence which bears witness to a well established conviction: "We should not hold among the sins," he causes his hero, the Sire of Sancy to say, "simple fornication nor adultery for love, according to the work of Cayet in his learned volume on the reestablishment of the bordeaux and his learned dispute on the seventh commandment. . . . This seventh commandment, which reads *Non moechaberis*, merely forbids the sin of the children of Onan, for *moicheuein* derives, according to this modern theologian, *apo tou moichou* and *cheuein*, *quod est humidum fundere*." In the *Baron de Foeneste*, d'Aubigné always refers to two books, although this facetious satire had been composed after the death of Palma Cayet, "Do you accuse him of magic," demands the Baron.—"He was in the beginning," replies Enay, who is none other than d'Aubigné himself, "accused of but two books, in one of which he sustained that neither fornication nor adultery was a sin forbidden by the seventh commandment, but that this commandment merely forbade *to moichon cheuein*, having to do with the sin of Onan, and thereupon he had the sacred Society (the Congregation of Jesus) for an enemy; the other book was to reestablish the bordeaux." The chapter (Book II, Chapter 22) ends with an abominable sonnet, which is also to be found at the end of the *Confession de Sancy*, under this title: *Syllogisme Expositoire sur la Controverse si l'Église est des Éleus Seulement*. This sonnet, the final stroke of which is imitated from a passage of the *Passavant*

of Théodore de Bèze, applies to the Roman Church the words of the prophet Ezekiel on the subject of the woman *quae divaricavit tibias suas sub omni arbore*; this sonnet, inspired by the abjuration of Palma Cayet, recalls the fact that this apostate “desired to lodge the whores in freedom” (*voulut loger les putains en franchise*), while he was still a Huguenot:

*Catholique, il poursuit encor son entreprise.**

Agrippa d'Aubigné, who was a personal enemy of the poor Cayet, and who never ceased to vomit forth against the latter the most atrocious injuries, felt that he might describe him thus:

L'Avocat des putains, syndic des maquereaux.†

Finally, in another passage of the *Confession de Sancy*, d'Aubigné once more puts upon the carpet one of the two books of Cayet, in speaking of the great Pope Sixtus V, “who opened the bordeaux of women and of lads from fault of having read the book of M. Cahier.” We may infer from this phrase, with some probability, that Cayet, in the discourse which he proposed to present to Parliament and which he had trigged out with Greek and Latin citations, had concerned himself with debauchery among all peoples and at all periods, and that he had not forgotten to mention, in support of his opinion, the authority of Pope Sixtus IV. (and not Sixtus V.), to whom was attributed the establishment of the places of Prostitution devoted to one and the other Venus. *Lupanaria utrique Veneri erexit*, the learned Corneille Agrippa of Nettesheim had said, in one of the first editions of his celebrated treatise, *De Vanitate et Incertitudine Scientiarum* (Chapter 64, *De Lenocinio*); but he afterwards modified this rather hazardous assertion and contented himself with recalling the fact that this debauched Pope had constructed at Rome a noble

*A Catholic, he still pursues his enterprise.

†The advocate of whores, syndic of maquereaux.

bordeau: *Romae nobile adomodum lupanar extruxit*. (See, in the *Dict. Hist. et Crit.* of Bayle, the article on SIXTUS IV.)

The pornographic plans of Palma Cayet were never submitted to the examination of Parliament or to the appraisal of competent judges. There was no reform, no innovation in the policing of manners, although some bad houses remained open with the tacit agreement of civil and criminal lieutenants. It is permissible, however, to suspect that grave abuses had taken place in this arbitrary tolerance of certain asylums of Prostitution; we are led to believe that the commissioners or their agents sometimes received pecuniary revenues or presents from the despicable agents of debauchery, for an ordinance of Henri III. dated the 15th. of October, 1588, lets it be understood that, in many circumstances, the magistrates had neglected to apply the edict of 1560 concerning the bordeaux, but had shown themselves favorable to the impure interests of the depraved gentry who lived at the expense of Prostitution. In this ordinance "against blasphemers, gaming-house keepers, tavern keepers, wine-shop proprietors, jugglers and persons making exercise of dissolute games" the two following paragraphs are to be remarked: "It is forbidden to all to keep bordeaux, gaming houses and games of dice, the which are to be punished extraordinarily without dissimulation or connivance on the part of judges on pain of being deprived of their offices.—It is forbidden to all proprietors to rent houses except to well-famed persons, and not to suffer in them any evil traffic or secret or public bordreau, under pain of a fine of 60 Parisian pounds for the first time and of 120 Parisian pounds for the second, and for the third time, deprivation of their property and houses." (See les *Edicts et Ordonnances des Rois de France*, collected by Ant. Fontanon and augmented by Gabr. Michel, edition of 1610, Volume IV., page 243.) There must therefore have been a "connivance" between the judges and the interested parties to lead the King thus to enjoin the former to refrain from all "dissimulation" in the hunting down and prosecution of secret bordeaux. This royal ordinance was not ob-

served any more scrupulously than the others, and Prostitution, that necessary outlet of the shameful passions which are always fermenting in a great city, had continued to find a *gîte* among the sweating-room keepers, the barbers, the hostlers, the wine-shop proprietors and the inn keepers, although the houses of such gentry, ill-famed enough, were constantly exposed to those domiciliary visits, by day and night, which the commissioners of the Châtelet were called upon to make, but which were not frequently made by them. "There were always," says Delamare (*Traité de la Police*, Volume I. page 525), "many individuals corrupt enough or interested enough to rent their houses wholly or in part for this infamous commerce. The police magistrates endeavored to cope with this by renewing from time to time the publication of their regulations and by endeavoring to put these into force by means of new ordinances."

Delamare first cites one of these ordinances dated the 19th. of July, 1619, and rendered by Messire Henry de Mesmes, Seigneur d'Irval, king's counsellor, civil lieutenant of the city, provost and Viscount of Paris. The king's procurator having complained that "a number of persons of evil life were lodging and retiring in that city and conducting bordels, causing a number of thefts, murders and assassinations," the civil lieutenant expressly forbade "all persons of whatever quality or condition they might be, to lodge in their houses any persons of evil life, under pain of loss of rents, even their houses to be placed at the disposition of the king's procurator for a period of three years, the deniers and revenue therefrom to be given over and rendered to the poor." At the same time, the civil lieutenant ordered "all vagabonds and debauched women to void the city and suburbs of Paris within twenty-four hours after the publication of the present ordinance, under pain of being imprisoned and the proceedings against them being made and perfected." The bourgeois and inhabitants of Paris were required to lend all the aid in their power to the first officer of the Châtelet and to the other officers of justice charged with the execution of this ordinance; they were also required to seize

all violators, and lead them to the quarters of the commissioner of their quarter, under pain of a fine of 100 Parisian pounds. This ordinance would appear to have been frequently renewed in almost the same terms; that of the 30th. of March, 1635, rendered by Michel Moreau, civil lieutenant of the provost's office, contained prescriptions still more rigorous, to judge by these three articles which Delamare extracts from it: "I. We have enjoined, according to the ordinances and decrees of the Court herein set forth, all vagabonds without condition and without trade, including all barbers' apprentices, tailors and those of all other conditions, as well as girls and debauched women, to take service and condition within twenty-four hours; otherwise to void this city and suburbs under pain, against the men, of being put in chains and sent to the galleys and against the women and girls, of the lash, of being shorn and of being perpetually banished without process of law.—II. All proprietors and principal tenants of the houses of this city and suburbs are forbidden to rent or sublease their houses except to persons of good life and good fame, and to suffer in them any evil traffic, sport or game, under pain of a fine of 60 pounds for the first time, the loss of rents for a period of three years for the second time, and the confiscation of their property for the third time for the profit of the Hôtel-Dieu of this city.—III. Similar prohibitions are addressed to tavern keepers, wine-shop proprietors, renters of furnished rooms and others, against lodging or receiving by day or by night, any persons of the said conditions, or administering to them any nourishment, under pain of exemplary punishment."

A number of tragic events, related in the *Journals* of Pierre de l'Estoile, show us how dangerous to the security of citizens were these debauchés, "ruffians" and unemployed who were thus required to leave Paris. They were ready to commit any crime, provided it was paid for. Like the "brave" (*bravi*) Italians, they constantly had a dagger in their hands, and when they did not bear arms, they made use of a *jeton*,* "which cut like a razor,"

**Jeton* is a counter or brass farthing. Cf. our "brass knucks'" (knuckles). The *jeton*, however, had a sharp edge.

in order to slash off the noses of their enemies or mutilate their faces, handling this instrument with great dexterity. (See the *Journal de Henri III.*, edition of MM. Champollion, page 131.) In 1581, Jean Levoix, counsellor to the Parliament of Paris, desired to avenge himself on his mistress, who was the wife of a procurator of the Châtelet, named Boulanger. This adulteress, whom he kept publicly, had resolved suddenly to amend her ways and change her manner of life; she therefore prayed her corrupter not to importune her any more, and resisted the efforts which he made to lead her back into vice. "Being constrained to go his way, he heaped a thousand injuries upon her, and upon leaving he called her 'whore' and 'wily one,' (*rusée*) and threatened to brand her as a woman of her trade." A short while afterward, on the eve of Pentecost, the poor woman being in the fields with her husband, Jean Levoix, accompanied by some "ruffians of the bordeau" (*ruffisques de tanchau*), surprised her there in a secluded place, and, having hurled her from her horse, he ordered the wretches whom he had brought with him to cut off her nose with a *jeton*. The victim of this frightful treatment brought suit against the counselor Jean Levoix, who was obliged to make an agreement with the complaining party and pay her 2,000 crowns. After the decree of the Parliament of Rouen which had put her son out of court, the mother of the guilty party went to thank the King. "Do not thank me," Henri III. told her, "but rather the bad justice of my realm, for if justice had been good, your son would never have caused you pain." The ruffians who had mutilated the wife of Boulanger, were less fortunate than Jean Levoix. It was ruffians of this sort who slew in 1576, in the rue des Lavandières, the Captain Richelieu, called Le Moine, "a man ill-famed and renowned for his larcenies, thefts and blasphemies, being for the rest a great ruffian and a runner of all the bordeaux." This Captain, irritated at the hubbub kept up in a house neighboring his own, by men and women of evil life, addressed them from the window about ten o'clock at night and threatened to expel them from their *canard*, "it being displeasing

to him that they should undertake their ruffianly and whorish enterprises so near his own lodgings, in his sight and under his beard." He was dared to come down into the street, and when he did so, before he had time to draw his sword, he fell, pierced by a hundred dagger strokes. (*Journ. de Henri III.*, page 65.) In 1607, another gentleman, whom De l'Estoile does not name was slain in a *bordeau* of Paris by the son of the Baron Rochefort in a quarrel.

This latter fact, reported by Pierre de l'Estoile, king's counsellor and grand crier to the Chancellery of France, proves that, notwithstanding the ordinances of the King and the regulations of the police, the *bordeaux* of Paris, tolerated if not authorized, enjoyed a scandalous notoriety which sometimes led to their being closed and the expulsion of the lost women and debased men who were found in them. Pierre de l'Estoile describes still better the strange disorders which reigned at this period with regard to the policing of manners: "On Wednesday, the 13th of April, 1611, was held the harangue (*mercuriale*), in which M. the first President (of Harlay) delivered a triumphant discourse on the necessity of reformation in all ranks of society and principally with regard to the grave abuses and corruptions of justice existing in the police of Paris, to which he asserted it was necessary to restore order, as he intended to do (but I fear this 'doing' remained a mere intention)." He goes on to speak strongly against the "gaming houses" (*brelans*) and *bordeaux* tolerated publicly and with impunity, and which should be closed. "Touching the gaming houses, it is the common thing and easy to verify, since there are said to be a thousand of them at Paris; but among these forty-seven are authorized, celebrated and so public that the civil lieutenant receives a *pistole* from each of them every day, which is a great gain, dishonest enough in truth, but very easy and assured, and beyond hazard." If the gaming houses were authorized in return for a daily revenue, payable to the civil lieutenant of the provost's office, it is clear that the *bordeaux* must also have paid for a similar toleration. But De l'Es-

toile does not say so, and we are reduced to supposing that the civil lieutenant drew one *pistole* each day from the great *bordeaux* as from the *brelan*, inasmuch as the *brelans* did not differ from the *bordeaux*.

“With regard to the *bordeaux* of Paris,” adds De l’Estoile, “I think we might justly apply to this city the saying of Stratonice, who, coming out of Heraclea, looked around in all directions to see if anyone saw him and when one of his friends demanded the reason, he replied: ‘Because I should be ashamed to be seen coming out of a brothel,’ indicating by this reply the corruption and lechery which was universal throughout the city. And as a matter of fact, even the street porters and the cobblers of the street corners and the slanderers of the Court and of the palace (most of whom were so by profession) cried out and said M. the first President, ought to begin by reforming his own house.” (*Mémoire et Journal* of P. de l’Estoile, on the reign of Henri IV, edition of MM. Champollion, page 661.)

CHAPTER XLII

WE HAVE sought the physiognomy of Prostitution in the fifteenth century among the poets of that epoch, especially in the poems of François Villon, who did not fear to tarnish his muse by promenading her from tavern to tavern and by giving her a cortège of *enfants perdus*, *mauvais garçons* and daughters of joy; it is now our task to make a similar investigation among the poems dating from the beginning of the seventeenth century, and especially among those of Mathurin Regnier, who, like Villon, has drawn a picture of the Prostitution of his times, without blushing to dedicate some of his works to the painting of such depraved manners. Villon was a vagabond scholar who lived in the wine-shops and the most shameful of the *clapiers*; Regnier was almost a courtier, almost a gentleman, almost an ecclesiastic, who, drawn by his own fitful passions, sometimes forgot his name, his birth and his rank in order to frequent incognito the most despicable asylums of public debauchery. In Villon we find the habit of moral degradation. In Regnier, on the contrary, we find, so to speak, a caprice and a fantasy for misconduct; we have here the adventurous pursuit of erotic pleasure under all its phases. Regnier, therefore, shall lead us, upon leaving the court of Henri IV, where his genius as a poet had won him an honorable position, into the hideous *gîtes* where free Prostitution then found refuge, made what it was by the prohibitive laws and the variable police measures dictated by municipal tolerance.

Mathurin Regnier, son of a sheriff of the city of Chartres, a nephew, on his mother's side of the poet Desportes, having assumed the tonsure at the age of eleven years and being destined to the priesthood, was early attached in the quality of a secretary, to the person of a cardinal, François de Joyeuse, who took him to Rome and kept him there for ten years; he was unable to resist

the libertine inclinations which caused him to fall into the most scandalous misdemeanors. It would be hard to say whether it was poetry which had predisposed him to debauchery, or debauchery which had awakened in him the poetic inspiration. Regnier whom amours had "rendered gray before his time," readily recognized the fact, at the age of thirty years, that his poetic temperament was of an epicurean nature: it was this temperament, it was this fire, he said,

*. . . qui rend le poète ardent et chaud,
Subject à ses plaisirs, de courage si haut,
Qu'il mesprise le peuple et les choses communes,
Et, bravant les faveurs, se moque des fortunes;
Qui le fait desbauché, frenetique, resvant,
Porter la teste basse et l'esprit dans le vent,
Esgayer sa fureur parmy des precipices,
Et plus qu'à la raison subject à ses caprices.**

He excused himself thus for "never fitting his youth to another fashion" (*ranger sa jeunesse à d'autres façons*), and on never changing his conduct, despite the reproaches which were addressed to him on one score alone, a point which he makes no pretense of hiding:

C'est que mon humeur libre à l'amour est sujete!†
(*Satire V.*)

There were other complaints which might have been lodged against the young Mathurin, who was otherwise adorned with

*Which renders the poet so ardent and so warm
In quest of pleasure, and does his courage join,
Till he, despising common folk and things,
Braving her favors, mocks at Fortune's flings;
Debauched and mad, head hanging very low,
His wind is in the wind, and with the wind must go
To seek the precipice in every season,
Since he is subject to caprice, not reason.

†It is that my free humor to love is subject.

all the best qualities of heart and mind, perfected by study, philosophy, and knowledge of the world. His deplorably libertine habits interfered with his advancement despite the great friendships which he had formed through his native charm and gentleness. The Cardinal De Joyeuse did not even dare obtain for him a canonry or an abbey; and when he quitted the service of this prelate to become secretary of the legation in the suite of Philippe de Béthune, French ambassador at the court of Rome, he was as poor and as amorous as he had been on his arrival from Chartres, under the auspices of his uncle, the Abbé Desportes. All the money which he had gained had been squandered in the sewers of Prostitution. Regnier has given us a picture of himself with a naïveté and a frankness which have made of this portrait the type of "runner of the bordeaux" (see *Satire VIII*, addressed to the Marquis de Coeuvres). He declares that the love of women is a very violent one with him, and that force and reason are absolutely lacking to enable him to resist this exclusive and dominant passion: "I do not have *the judgment*," he says,

*De conduire ma barque en ce ravissement;
Au gouffre du plaisir la courante m'emporte;
Tout ainsi qu'un cheval qui a la bouche forte,
J'obéis au caprice. . . .**

He abandons himself, it is true, with some delicacy to *this fougue* of the senses; his fault was a voluntary one; he is content with his lot; he finds himself too happy, he tells us,

*D'estre, comme je suis, en tous lieux amoureux,
Et, come è bien aymer mille causes m'invitent,†*

*To guide my bark in seas of ravishment;
To pleasure's gulf the current sweeps along,
Just like a horse whose mouth is very strong,
And I obey caprice. . . .

†At being, as I am, on every amorous scene,
Where, while a thousand things to love invite,

*Aussi mille beautez mes amours ne limitent;
Et courant çà et là, je trouve tous les jours,
En des subjects nouveaux, de nouvelles amours.**

Regnier loves without choice; all women are good to him: the old as well as the young, the ugly as well as the beautiful. He sustains this singular thesis, that the most ill-favored creature, the most repulsive, may still play her role of woman in the eternal comedy of love. There we have the refinement of a monstrous and depraved sensuality! None other than Regnier, perhaps, would have emitted such a paradox, among all the erotic poets, ancient and modern:

*Tant l'aveugle appetit ensorcelle les hommes,
Qu'encores qu'une femme aux amours fasse peur,
Que le ciel et Venus la voient à contre-cœur,
Toutesfois, estant femme, elle auro ses delices,
Relevera sa grace avecq des artifices,
Qui dans l'estat d'amour la sauront maintenir,
Et par quelques attraits les amants retenir.†*

He goes on to develop, as a convinced expert, his system of compensations in love, and he brings to life the secret merits which are to be encountered in a woman to make up for her exterior defects and her apparent inferiority; he is in agreement with Ovid, when he even takes sides in favor of the silly and the ignorant:

*A thousand beauties are insufficient quite;
But, running here and there, I every day
Find novel subjects for my amorous play.

†Blind appetite does so bewitch us men
That, though a woman is of such a mien
As to fight Heaven and Venus when she's seen,
Still, being woman, she shall find delight
Covering with artifice each natural blight,
And in the state of love, she still shall dwell,
Holding her lovers by a lonesome spell.

*Je croy qu'au fait d'amour elle sera scavante,
Et que Nature, habile à couvrir son deffault,
Luy aura mis au lict tout l'esprit qu'il luy faut.**

He thinks that this foreseeing Nature has so well arranged things,

*De peur que nulle femme, ou fust laide ou fust belle,
Ne vescu sans le faire et ne mourust pucelle.†*

After having in this manner justified all the imperfections which may be the lot of the feminine sex, he comes back to his own blind and irresistible need of endeavoring everywhere to assuage the forces of his incontinence. He expresses the violence and ardor of his temperament with a libidinous verve which we are only to encounter in *Rétif de la Bretonne* a century and a half later: this is not love, it is sensuality, without delicacy, without bridle and without law:

*Or, moy qui suis tout flamme, et de nuict et de jour,
Qui n'haleine que feu, ne respire qu'amour,
Je me laisse emporter à mes ardeurs communes,
Et cours sous divers vents de diverses fortunes.
Ravy de mes objets, j'ayme si vivement,
Que je n'ay pour l'amour ny choix ny jugement.
De toute eslection mon ame est despourveue,
Et nul object certain ne limite ma veue.
Toute femme m'agrée. . . .‡*

*In love, 'tis my opinion, she is wise,
And Nature cleverly shall conceal her lack,
When she in bed lies flat upon her back.

†From fear some woman, hag or beauty, die
A virgin and, a virgin, go on high.

‡Now I, who am all flame and all desire,
Who breathe, by night or day, none but love's fire,
I drift away with all the winds that blow
And all of fortune's varying breezes know,
Ravished with love, I can no longer choose,
But I, in love, all judgment straightway lose:
Election leaves my soul, and I am left
With a lover's vision that is never cleft:
All women are good to me. . . .

It would be impossible to show oneself more complacent toward vice. We can understand that, in this continual impatience for illicit pleasures, Regnier must have had more than one encounter which was unfortunate at once for his health and for his purse: hence, all the scourges of Venus which crushed him with premature infirmities. His Maecenas, Philippe de Bethune, came to his aid by providing him with a canonry in the church of Notre Dame de Chartres and a pension of 2,000 pounds from the Abbey of Vaux-Cernay, of which his uncle, Desportes, had been the titular abbot. Regnier, aged barely thirty-one years, was already infirm, suffering from gout and rheumatism, and laden with disgusting memories of his debauches; he fell back incessantly into the hands of the physicians, who despaired of curing him. In a number of his poems, he pictures the sad state to which he had been reduced by what he calls the "good natural law" (*bonne loi naturelle*), to which he had yielded with so good a grace:

*La douleur aux traits veneneux,
Comme d'un habit épineux,
Me ceint d'une horrible torture;
Mes beaux jours sont changés en nuits,
Et mon coeur, tout fletry d'ennuis,
N'attend plus que la sepulture.*

*Enivré de cent maux divers,
Je chancelle et vay de travers,
Tant mon ame en regorge pleine:
J'en ay l'esprit tout hebesté,**

*Grief, her pock-marked face forlorn,
As with a fiery cloak of thorn,
With torture cinctures me;
My fine days to nights now change,
My heart with ennui is strange,
And naught but the grave can see.
Worn am I with a hundred woes,
As one who this way, that way goes;
My soul to belch is fain:
What wind I have is over-dull,

*Et si peu qui m'en est resté,
Encor me fait-il de la peine.**

But the inextinguishable sufferings which he experienced in all his body, the disagreeable treatment which he was forced to follow, the painful operations to which he was condemned, were not the greatest chastisement he had to endure: his greatest punishment was the shame at feeling himself incapable of reentering upon the career of vice which he had formerly pursued. In one of his elegies, he relates, in fine verses, worthy of the Greek and Latin erotics, the affront which one of his mistresses had one day to suffer as a price of the favors she had wished to show him; he blushes at finding his faculties so hostile to his desires:

*Mais quoy! que deviendray-je en l'extresme vieillesse,
Puisque je suis retif au fort de ma jeunesse,
Et si las! je ne puis, et jeune et vigoureux,
Savourer la douceur du plaisir amoureux?
Ah! j'en rougis de honte et despite mon age,
Age de peu de force et de peu de courage! . . .
Pour flatter mon deffaut, mais que me sert la gloire,
De mon amour passé inutile mémoire,
Quand, aymant ardemment et ardemment aimé,
Tant plus je combattois, plus j'estois animé;
Guerrier infatigable en ce doux exercice,
Par dix ou douze fois je rentrois dans la lice.†*

*And from it I can only cull
The bitter fruit of pain.

†Alas! What shall I be in my last hour,
Who am so barren in my youth's fine flower,
So barren and fatigued I cannot taste
The joy of pleasure as my forces waste?
Ah! I must blush from shame and from deep pain,
So little force, so little courage there! . . .
I can but think, to flatter my sad plight,
Of days gone by, but that is useless quite,
Days when the more I loved, the more I grew
In power to love, no amorous limit knew;
A tireless warrior whose aim ne'er missed,
A dozen times I'd enter, then, the list.

This insufficiency was, undoubtedly, but transient and due to circumstances, but Regnier who flattered himself at being able to love "even after his death," found difficulty in recovering from the humiliation, which he could only assign to his own abuse of pleasures and the ravages of shameful maladies. He recommenced, none the less, his search of fortune in the ill-famed streets, in an effort to retrieve his energies by means of Prostitution. Let us follow him, at some distance, in these pornographic excursions.

One evening, after a ridiculous dinner at which he, against his own will, had assisted as a guest, a dinner which ended in a general battle, he left the house without demanding a light, bent upon regaining his own lodging; but he dwelt far from there, and he knew the road badly; moreover, the night was one of the blackest and the rain was falling in torrents. He walked along the houses sheltered by the lean-to's of shops and enveloped in his mantle, when he was brought up suddenly "in an evil passage." He sought to cling to the wall, but it was not a wall which met his hand; it was a door, which was not closed, and which suddenly opened fully. He fell inside it, with some fracas, flat upon his belly, and found himself in the entry-way of a dark and stinking alley:

*On demande que c'est: je me releve, j'entre,
Et, voyant que le chien n'aboyoit point la nuit,
Que les verrous graissez ne faisoient aucun bruit,
Qu'on me rioit au nez et qu'une chambriere
Vouloit cacher ensemble et monstrier la lumiere,
Je suis, je le voy bien. . . . Je parle; l'on respond:
Ou, sans fleurs de bien dire ou d'autre art plus profond,**

*What is it, I demand, arise and enter,
And, seeing that no dog gives the alarm,
But heavy bolts are noiseless as a charm,
With a chamber-wench beneath my very nose,
Hiding a light with which the way she shows,
I know well where I am. . . . I speak and hear
Reply that lets me know I need not fear:

*Nous tombâmes d'accord. Le monde je contemple,
Et me trouve en un lieu de fort mauvais exemple.**

Having once entered "this dwelling of honor" (*ce logis d'honneur*) to pay his respects to his hostess, he undoes his purse and tosses it upon the table. Upon catching the gleam of a crown, the servant maid and the governess of girls are ready to serve him, murmuring "The honest man that he is!" and hastening to please him to the best of their ability. But here are three old sour-faces, who approach with numbered steps and who crouch down on their haunches before the hearth where a little fire of hemp-stalks is burning. One might have said they were three phantoms escaped from Hell: one had the threatening air and bold mien of a Eumenide of the theater; the second is more decrepit and more wrinkled than a sorceress of the sabbaths; the third is so skinny, so yellow, so transparent that one might have counted her bones. These frightful old hags, covered with plasters and with scars, are groaning over their infirmities gained "on the field of honor and of virtue." One has a disease of the loins, another of the teeth, and the third complains of her cautery:

*En tout elles n'avoient seulement que deux yeux,
Encore bien flettris, rouges et chassieux;
Que la moitié du nez, que quatre dents en bouche,
Qui durant qu'il fait vent branlent sans qu'on les touche.
Pour le reste, il estoit comme il plaisoit à Dieu.
En elles, la santé n'avoit ni feu ni lieu,
Et chascune, à part soy, representoit l'idole
Des fièvres, de la peste et al de l'orde (horrible) verole.†*

*We understand each other very well;
I am acquainted with this little Nell.

†Between them but two eyes they had, I swear,
Two red, blear eyes, these hags beyond compare,
But half a nose, four teeth between them all,
Which with the slightest breeze seemed like to fall.
As for the rest, thanks to God's pleasant grace,
Nor health nor fire in them had any place,
But each on her part was the image true
Of fevers pestilence and the syphilis, too.

Such were the abominable megaeras who exploited a legal Prostitution at that time, and who were tireless in laboring for their own profit. Regnier, "at this hideous spectacle," was filled with horror for his own vice, and was preparing to beat a retreat, when suddenly:

*. . . D'un cabinet sortit un petit coeur,
Avec son chapperon, sa mine de poupée,
Disant: "J'ay si grand' peur de ces hommes d'espée,
Que si je n'eusse veu qu'estiez un financier,
Je me fusse plustost laissé crucifier
Que de mettre le nez où je n'ay rien à faire.
Jean, mon mary, monsieur, il est apoticaire?
Surtout, vive l'amour et bran pour les sergents!
Ardez! voire, c'est mon! je me cognois en gens:
Vous estes, je voy bien, grand abbateur de quilles,
Mais, au reste, honneste homme, et payez bien les filles!"**

Thus, among the women of evil life, there were married women, or at least those who boasted of being married in order to inspire more confidence in a customer. "But, Monsieur," the *petit coeur* says to him, with a thousand courtesies, "have you not supped?

*Je vous pri', notez l'heure? Eh bien! que vous en semble?
Estes-vous pas d'avis que nous couchions ensemble?"†*

* When from a closet came a little sweet,
A doll's own counterpart in hat and charms,
Saying: "I greatly fear these men of arms,
If I'd not seen you were a financier,
Than crucify me if I'd be your dear,
For where I put my nose I'm very wary.
My husband, Jean, is an apothecary?
What of it? Long live love, is what I say.
A fig for the police. I know my way:
I can see that you at spittles have some skill,
An honest man, who pays the girls their fill."

†Note well the hour, and also note the weather.
Do you not think that we should flee together?

Regnier was bedraggled to the eyes and wet through to the bone; he had need of nothing but a bed, and all he asked was to sleep. The *dame du logis* then offers to conduct him into a chamber where he shall be well provided for; she shows him the way and goes in front of him, speaking all the while of two girls, Jeanne and Macette, who are the fortune of her house:

*Par le vray Dieu! qui Jeanne estoit et claire et nette,
Claire comme un bassin, nette comme un denier;
Au reste, fors Monsieur, que j'estois le premier.**

It was Jeanne whom Regnier had just glimpsed; but all the good that might be said of her could not persuade him to see her closer up. A tortuous staircase led to the place where Regnier was to find a lodging for the night:

*La montée estoit torte et de fascheux accez:
Tout branloit dessous nous jusqu' au dernier estage.
D'eschelle en eschellon, comme un linot en cage,
Il falloit sauteler et des pieds s'accrocher,
Ainsi comme une chèvre en grim pant un rocher.
Après cent soubresautz, nous vinsmes en la chambre,
Qui n'avoit pas le goust de musc, civette ou d'ambre:
La porte en estoit basse et sembloit un guichet,
Qui n'avoit pour serrure autre engin qu'un crochet.†*

At the moment when, bent double, Regnier was about to enter this hole, he struck his head and made a false step which sent him

*By the true God! but Jeanne was fresh and clean
As any coin or basin ever seen,
And for the rest, monsieur, I was the first.

†The stair was crooked, very hard to climb:
And shook beneath us in a fearful rage.
From rung to rung, like linnet in a cage,
We had to leap and cling and stem the shock
Just like a nanny-goat upon a rock.
A hundred somersaults, we reached the room,
No civet, musk or amber in its gloom;
The door was low—a wicket were more like—
And with no lock except a rusty spike.

tumbling backwards to the bottom of the stairs, "with head and rump counting each step." He had taken with him in his fall the poor lady, who was more mistreated than he, and who remained stretched out, her nose upon the flag-stones, "without pulse and without breath." The others came running at the noise; a light was brought, and the lady was revived sufficiently to cry out and storm against Jeanne and Macette, whom she accused of having "brought her bad luck" (*porter guignon.*) Regnier, for the first time in his life, perhaps, did not think of love, but aspired merely to be alone, in order to be free from impure temptations. He armed himself with a candle, climbed the stairs again and took possession of the infected hovel which had been assigned to him as a sleeping chamber; he did not see any bed, but made thus an inventory of all the strange objects which were presented to his view:

*Or, en premier item, sous mes pieds, je rencontre
Un chaudron, esbreché, la bourse d'une montre,
Quatre boîtes d'unguents, une d'alun brulé,
Deux gands despariez (dépareillés), un manchon tout pelé,
Trois fioles d'eau bleue, autrement d'eau seconde,
La petite seringue, une éponge, une sonde,
Du blanc, un peu de rouge, un chiffon de rabat,
Un balay pour brusler en allant au sabbat,
Une vieille lanterne, un tabouret de paille,
Qui s'estoit sur trois pieds sauvé de la bataille;
Un baril defoncé, deux bouteilles sur cu,**

*Item the first, beneath my very feet,
A broken kettle and a watch-bag meet,
Four ointment boxes, one of burnt-alum stuff,
Three phials of *eau benite*, another kind,
A little syringe, a sponge, a probe I find,
A little rouge and powder and chiffon,
A broom for the witches' Sabbath, to ride upon,
An ancient lantern, taboret of straw,
Upon three legs, saved from the battle's maw;
A caved-in cask, two bottles upon end,
Which, throatless, speak: "We've lived too much, my friend!"

*Qui disoient, sans goulot: "Nous avons trop vescu!"
 Un petit sac tout plein de poudre de mercure,
 Un vieux chapperon gras de mauvaise teinture. . . . **

While Regnier was reviewing these miserable and sordid relics of Prostitution, Jeanne arrived, bearing under her arm the material to furnish the bed, which consisted of a door placed upon two wobbly trestles and laden with a straw pallet; Jeanne, who had just been scolded and beaten by her *dame*, takes revenge by indulging in a thousand insults against "that old villainess" (*cette vilaine*), complaining all the while of her condition:

*"Qui vit céans, ma foy! n'a pas besogne faite!
 Tousjours à nouveau mal nous vient nouveau soucy;
 Je ne scay, quant à moy, quel logis c'est icy:
 Il n'est, par le vray Dieu! jour ouvrier ny feste,
 Que ces carongnes-là ne me rompent la teste.
 Bien, bien, je m'en iray, sitost qu'il fera jour!
 On trouve dans Paris d'autres maisons d'amour! . . .
 Tousjours après souper ceste vilaine crie!
 Monsieur, n'est-il pas temps? couchon-nous, je vous prie!"†*

While speaking thus, she made the bed, "as black as a scullion," and drew over it the covers, which were too short and spotted with equivocal stains:

*One little sack, quite full of mercury,
 A faded hat—such are the things I see.

It is to be noted that we have here a foretaste of French naturalism, of Flaubertian realism.

†Who lives here, by my faith! has sorry luck!
 Always new trouble brings new weight of care;
 If there's a worse house, I do not know where:
 By the true God! no feast or working day
 But these jades break their heads in whorish fray.
 I swear, I'll leave when it is light above!
 There are in Paris other homes of love! . . .
 When supper's done, you always hear them say:
 "Monsieur, it's time. Let's go to bed, I pray."

*Dieu scait quels lacs d'amour, quels chiffres, quelles fleurs,
De quels compartimens et combien de couleurs,
Relevoient leur maintien et leur blancheur naïfve,
Blanchie en un sivé (ou privé?), non dans une lessive!**

The bed was made; Jeanne solicited Regnier to lie down; but although he was ready to drop from lack of sleep, this frightful bed did not tempt him any more than the object which he was to meet there; but the girl left him no respite; she unbuckled his shoes and took off his doublet by force. Regnier resisted all the time, "playing the honest man," until he finally decided to drain the chalice. He took off one shoe and a garter and proceeded slowly to remove his other clothes and then ventured with horror under those terrible bedclothes. He was not there long when there came a clamor at the street door and someone called "Catherine!" Jeanne put out the light, which had probably attracted the attention of some belated passer-by. She did not reply and no one in the house said a word. Then the knocks redoubled; there was a sound of hands and feet; someone was breaking in the door; there were cries, threats and oaths. Jeanne, during all this time, delivered a "sermon" to the poor Regnier, who was very much disturbed at all this; she reproached him with not having gone to bed more quickly, and with having lost precious time, which he could not regain. "What the devil," she said to him with ill humor, "what the devil do you expect?" The knocking at the door kept up, but the tune was changed, and the threats had become prayers; and yet the door was not opened. Then they counterfeited the royal guard; they spoke sometimes as soldiers, sometimes as citizens: "Open in the name of the King!" The true guard came running at the noise, and the comrades in debauchery fled through the neighboring streets. There was a moment's truce, during which Regnier leaped from the bed and began to grope for his clothing; but the more he hastened, the less progress he made; he

*God knows what lakes of love, what figured flowers,
Colored mementoes of what amorous bowers,
Relieved the gleaming whiteness of their mien—
Not in a wash-tub whitened, but a latrine!

could find only scattered fragments of his costume: in place of his hat, he found an old shoe; when he looked for his doublet he found his stocking. Jeanne had not budged from the bed. She encouraged him, however, to put himself in a state to meet the guard without compromising her:

*"Si mon compère Pierre est de garde aujourd'hui,
Non, ne vous fâchez point, vous n'aurez point d'ennui!"**

And then came the guard, knocking authoritatively this time; someone from the house cried "Patience!" and a window was opened for a parley. Regnier, half clad, departed as gently as possible from the hole, where his place would at once be taken by another; he descended the ladder, one foot stockinged and the other nude. He hid himself in an angle of the wall at the moment when the door to the alley gave way to a patrol of the guard, who hurled themselves into the house, "in a humor," he adds, "to do us a bad enough turn." He was not seen and was able to make his escape without saying either good evening or good day to anyone; he strode away as fast as he could from this cut throat den, and he kept on running for a long time without looking behind him, until he took a tumble in a pile of mortar. Day was beginning to break when he reached his own house "slimy as a pig," swearing that he would never again find himself in such a pass, for, he says as he goes to bed, he

*. . . . Qui, troublé d'ardeur, entre au bordel aveugle,
Quand il en sort, il a plus d'yeux et plus aigus
Que Lyncé l'Argonaute ou le jaloux Argus.†*

(Satyre IX.)

Despite all his oaths, Regnier was inclined to perjure himself and to return to the vices which he so loved. For him, all roads

*If my godfather, Pierre, is of the guard,
Do not be frightened; it will not go hard.

†He who in heat a brothel blindly enters,
On coming out, has more and sharper eyes, egad,
Than Lyncé, the Argonaut, or jealous Argus had.

led to a den of Prostitution, where he had so many times left behind him his health, his purse and his honor. Another day (see the *Discours d'une vieille maquerelle*), after having quarreled with one of his friends, whom he calls Philon, he conceived the following idea, in order to forget his wrath:

*Dans un lieu de mauvais renom,
Où jamais femme n'a dit non.**

He entered in great heat and was afflicted at finding no one but the landlady. The latter, who was a very complacent old dame, remarked to him with a smile, shaking her head:

*. . . Excusez! c'est la feste
Qui fait que l'on ne trouve rien;
Car tout le monde est gens de bien:
Et si j'ay promis en mon ame
Qu'à ce jour, pour n'entrer en blasme,
Ce peché ne seroit commis.
Mais vous estes de nos amis,
Parmanenda! je vous le jure,
Il faut, pour ne vous faire injure,
Après mesme avoir eu le soin
De venir chez nous de si loin,
Que ma chambrière j'envoie†*

*To a bad place I will go,
Where no woman e'er said no.

†Sorry! but it's a feast-day, sir,
Which means there's nothing in our way,
Since all the world is good today:
And I have promised, on my soul,
That on this day, to keep it whole,
No sin should in this house be done.
But since of us, my frined, you're one,
Then, by the Lord! to you I swear,
Your feelings we must surely spare,
Since you have come from far to find
A little pleasure with our kind;
And so, my wench I will employ

*Jusques à l'Escu de Savoye.
Là, mon amy, tout d'un plein saut,
On trouvera ce qu'il vous faut.**

The chambermaid receives the orders of her mistress and runs to the *Écu de Savoie*, which was an ill-famed hostelry where one was always sure of meeting women of good will. This detail proves to us that the hostelries, the taverns and the sweating-rooms were then the privileged places of Prostitution and that the poor wretches who practiced in secret their shameful trade, proscribed by law, were constantly waiting in such places, attracted there by the company of depraved men. But nothing took place there of a nature to call for the interference of the police, under whose supervision all the public places were. In the neighboring streets, however, there were not lacking courtiers of debauchery, who lent their houses for the purpose of mercenary loves. It was in the houses of these old women, under their eyes and under their direction, that poor girls, and frequently married women, prostituted themselves, at the risk of being arrested and imprisoned as such guilty of having sold their bodies. We may believe, nevertheless, that such arrests were rare, and that the sergeants had been ordered to keep their eyes shut. The dwelling of the *pourvoyeuses de bordeau*, as they were then described, was not, properly speaking, a bad house open to every comer, and the agents of the king encountered almost unsurmountable difficulties in endeavoring to apply the law to this species of *maisons de passe*, which did not provide a dwelling for either daughters of joy or vagabonds, but which served, so to speak, as a neutral ground for Prostitution. To come back to Regnier, whom we have left entering one of these infamous retreats, since a chambermaid could not return in less than a quarter of an hour, the hostess prayed him to be seated and indulged in a flood of words in order to pass the time for him.

*To go to the Escu de Savoye,
And there, my friend, we'll find on the fire
The very thing that you desire.

After having endeavored to launch a conversation, which the poet absolutely refused to share, impatient as he was at having to wait and confused at finding himself in such a circumstance, she undertook to relate, point by point, her past history, which was, after all, but a reminiscence of *Courtisane pervertie* of Joachim Dubellay. By means of this tale, which Regnier listened to with only one ear, she sought to render him patient. She reviewed her numerous amours, from the time her mother had sold, three or four times, that virginity which a lover had been the first to take; she did not conceal the fact that she had learned her indecent trade by trafficking in herself, as she now trafficked in others, since, being old and withered, she was no longer able to continue her old mode of life. But she prided herself on being more clever than others of her kind and on having the best clientele in Paris.

*Je suis vendeuse de chandelles:
Il ne s'en voit point de fidèles
Dans leur estat, comme je suis.
Je cognois bien ce que je puis:
Je ne puis aimer la jeunesse
Qui veut avoir trop de finesse,
Car les plus fines de la cour
Ne me cachent point leur amour.
Telle va souvent à l'église
De qui je cognois la feintise;
Telle qui veut son faict nier
Dit que c'est pour communier;**

*Selling candles, good sir, is my trade:
And you'll find neither woman nor maid
In their calling as faithful as I.
I know well enough not to try
To flatter the fancies of youth,
Which wants too much fineness forsooth.
Yet the finest there are at the court
With me seek the means of good sport.
There is one who goes daily to mass,
But I know well enough what's her pass;
I know she does dissimilate,
When she goes thus to communicate;

*Mais la chose m'est indiquée:
C'est pour estre communiquée
A ses amys, par mon moyen,
Comme Hélène fit au Troyen.**

The old woman was in the midst of her confidences, when a police commissioner passed the house, the door of which was half open. The sergeant, who accompanied the commissioner, pushed the door open and entered. Regnier had barely time to leave by another exit, which he knew, and retire to the house of a neighbor,

*Moitié figue, moitié raisin,
N'ayant ny tristesse ny joye
De n'avoir point trouvé la proye.†*

Regnier, who paraded his vagabond appetites in all the bad houses of the city, makes no attempt in his verses to conceal the abject condition of the wretched women whom he was in the habit of frequenting for his pleasures, and whom he despised, undoubtedly, more than anyone. We find, however, the direct expression of this contempt in only one verse:

*Si moins qu'une putain on estimoit ma muse!‡
(Satire IV)*

It may be remarked also that, in his poems, where he displays no shame in painting with large strokes the relaxation of manners, the names of the scandalous companions of his debauched life are not detailed with that brazen ostentation which the poets

*For the thing to me it is plain:
That when to communion she's fain,
Her case is like Helen's of Troy,
And I am the means to her joy.

†Half a raisin, half a fig,
And neither sad nor glad, may say,
At being cheated of the fray.

..“*Moitié figue, moitié raisin*” is the proverbial expression still current.

‡If less than a whore one should esteem my muse!

of his age were in the habit of displaying in their works in speaking of their amours, of whatever sort they may have been. Regnier has sufficient self-respect not to rear a poetic altar to the dishonored beings whom he looks upon as the material instruments of vice, rather than as the sorry victims of the passions. He names only Madelon and Antoinette, in two epigrams, one of which only is obscene, while the other well describes the woman of light life, the frank and audacious type of Prostitution; here we have her:

*Magdelon n'est point difficile,
Comme un tas de mignardes sont:
Bourgeois et gens sans domicile,
Sans beaucoup marchander, luy font:
Un chascun qui veut la recoustre.
Pour raison, elle dit ce poinct:
Qu'il faut estre putain tout outre,
Ou bien du tout ne l'estre point.**

The poet appears to desire to cast a veil of pity and forgetfulness over those unfortunate ones who were but too often innocent of their misdeeds, impelled to them as they were by an unworthy stepmother, or counselled by an abominable procurer. But he does not pardon, on the other hand, the intermediaries of debauchery, those degraded old women and devout hypocrites, who, not being able to live any longer at the expense of their own withered beauty, still drew an infamous revenue from Prostitution by corrupting young girls, turning wives from the path of duty and showing themselves the implacable enemy of modesty in their sex. It is Regnier who gives us the admirable por-

*Madelon is not hard to please,
As a lot of lasses are:
Bourgeois or beggar, at their ease,
May have her without going far:
And to each one whom she may greet
She gives this reason, very pretty:
To be a whore is very meet,
Or not be one: that is her ditty.

trait of Macette, that female Tartuffe, whose male counterpart Molière undoubtedly meant to give us in his comedy of that name. The satire on *Macette* (and under this proverbial name, we are to recognize a number of famous courtezans of the end of the sixteenth century) was, perhaps, but a personal vengeance, but it was generally looked upon as a work of virtuous indignation against the procuresses in general, and Regnier, wholly debauched as he was, was regarded as a benefactor for having acted as the energetic interpreter of the opinion of decent folk respecting these detestable corrupters, who were so numerous and who spread everywhere the poison of their perversity.

*La fameuse Macette, â la cour si connue,
Qui, s'est aux lieux d'honneur en crédit maintenue,
Et qui, depuis dix ans jusqu'en ses derniers jours,
A soustenu le prix en l'escrime d'amours;
Lasse enfin de servir au peuple de quintaine,
N'estant passe-volant, soldat ny capitaine,
Depuis les plus chetifs jusques aux plus fendans,
Qu'elle n'ait desconfit et mis dessus les dents,
Lasse, dis-je, et non saoule, enfin s'est retirée.**

This courtezan, who knew no other heaven than the heaven of her bed, hurls herself into devotion and displays a striking repentance for her errors. She dresses herself without the courtezan's usual art, she fasts, she prays, she visits churches and convents, and she carries about with her rosaries and blessed beads, while she is no longer occupied with any but pious works; she is to be found incessantly in front of the altars, trembling, prostrate and weeping, like the Magdalen, and, like the Magdalen,

*The famous Macette, who is at court so known
That she is lodged in honor, honor shown,
And who for ten years has been borne above
At all the tourneys on the field of love,
Tired, at last, of being in the file,
With neither soldier's nor a captain's style,
But mingling with the riff-raff at the rear,
Without discomfiture and without fear—
Tired, I say, not surfeited, retired.

beating her breast; she is now one of the blessed; she is a saint whom everyone admires and whose villainous past is hidden under the fine cloak of an austere repentance. Regnier, who remembered the high deed of this great sinner, very much doubted her conversion and did not permit himself to be taken in by appearances. One day, when he came to the house of a *filles*, whither his "fantasy" led him, he was not surprised to see this old screech-owl appear, "entering with slow and deliberate steps, with modest words and eyes composed," saluting the beauty with an *Ave Maria*. Regnier had the time to hide himself behind a door without being perceived; from his retreat he could hear everything, and he lent an attentive ear to the discourses of the holy hypocrite, who, after the usual commonplaces of edifying morality, brazenly broached the object of her visit by telling the young woman that she ought, "being beautiful, to have beautiful clothes." Macette knew a rich man who loved the poor innocent, and who asked nothing more than to be permitted to spend money upon her; he would give her, whenever she was willing, fine habits of silk, pearls, rubies and everything necessary to set off the beauty of a woman. The mistress of Regnier listened with astonishment to this strange advice, which she was far from expecting to hear from this execrable corrupter, who lays before her impudently the whole doctrine of Prostitution. What is honor "but an old saint who is no longer in repute?"

*La sage le scait vendre, ou la sotte le donne.**

The perfidious counsellor does not stop here in her shameful encouragement to debauchery; she goes on to unveil, without modesty, all the horrible mysteries of her own impudicity. She employs all her cleverness and all her eloquence in perverting this young girl, who, while being no novice, was not yet a graduate prostitute; she lays off her mask of decency and hypocrisy to show herself as she is in reality, in order to astound and fascinate the victim whom she would betray, by teaching her to en-

*The wise one sells, the silly gives it free.

rich herself through her own dishonor. "My daughter," she says to her, in the most caressing voice:

*Non, non, faites l'amour et vendez aux amans
 Vos accueils, vos baisers et vos embrassemens.
 C'est gloire et non pas honte, en ceste douce peine,
 Des acquests de son lit accroistre son domaine.
 Vendez ces doux regards, ces attraits, ces appas:
 Vous-même vendez-vous, mais ne vous livrez pas.
 Conservez-vous l'esprit, gardez vostre franchise;
 Prenez tout, s'il se peut, ne soyez jamais prise. . . .
 Prenez à toutes mains, ma fille, et vous souvienn
 Que le gain a bon goust, de quelque endroit qu'il vienne.
 Estimez vos amans, selon le revenu:
 Qui donnera le plus, qu'il soit le mieux venu.
 Laissez la mine à part, prenez garde à la somme:
 Riche vilain vaut mieux que pauvre gentilhomme.
 Je ne juge, pour moy, les gens sur ce qu'ils sont,
 Mais selon le profit et le bien qu'ils me font.
 Quand l'argent est meslé, l'on ne peut reconnaistre
 Celuy du serviteur d'avec celuy du maistre.
 L'argent d'un cordon-bleu n'est pas d'autre façon,
 Que celuy d'un fripier ou d'un aide à maçon. . . .**

*No, no, make love, and to your lovers sell
 Your kisses and embraces; charge them well.
 It is a glory with one's amorous pains
 And earnings to increase one's fair domains.
 Then sell your glances, anything to live;
 Even sell yourself—yes, sell, but do not give.
 Keep well your mind, and guard your liberty;
 Take all you can, but still be always free. . . .
 Take with both hands, my daughter, nor forget
 That gain is always good, where'er 'tis met.
 Esteem your lovers by the toll they pay;
 To him who pays the most, most welcome say.
 Forget all else; prefer whene'er you can
 A rich old villain to poor gentleman.
 For my part, I would never judge the trade
 Except by the profit which from each is made.
 The master's money or the servant's, which
 Is which I cannot tell: for both I itch.
 The silver of the Holy Ghost's own knight
 No different is from that of mason's might. . . .

*Tous ces beaux suffisans dont la cour est semée
 Ne sont que triacleurs et vendeurs de fumée;
 Ils sont beaux, bien peignez, belle barbe au menton:
 Mais quand, il faut payer, au diantre le teston!
 Et faisant des mourans et de l'ame saisie,
 Ils croient qu'on leur doit, pour rien, la courtoisie.
 Mais c'est pour leur beau nez! Le puits n'est pas commun;
 Si j'en avois un cent, ils n'en auroient pas un. . . .
 Qui le fait à credit n'a pas grande ressource:
 On y fait des amis, mais peu d'argent en bourse.
 Prenez-moi ces abbez, ces fils de financiers,
 Dont depuis cinquante ans les pères usuriers,
 Volans à toutes mains, ont mis en leur famille
 Plus d'argent que le roy n'en a dans la Bastille.
 C'est là que vostre main peut faire de beaux coups.
 Je scay de ces gens-là qui soupirent pour vous;
 Car, estant ainsi jeune, en vos beautez parfaites,
 Vous ne pouvez sçavoir tous les coups que vous faites,
 Et les traits de vos yeux, haut et bas esclancez,
 Belle, ne voyent pas tous ceux que vous blessez.
 Tel s'en vient plaindre à moy, qui n'ose le vous dire! . . .**

*All those fine beaux with whom the court is sown
 Are but smoke-vendors when the truth is known;
 Oh, they are fine chaps, fine beard upon the chin,
 But as to pay, the devil take them in!
 Pretending death, with hand upon the heart,
 They think you should for nothing play your part,
 For a fine nose! But I will quickly tell
 These gentlemen this is no common well. . . .
 And to give credit, that is ever worse:
 You may make friends, no money in the purse.
 Give me an abbot or a banker's son,
 Whose fathers and their fathers, every one,
 At robbing usury have got more gold
 Than has the king, when all his wealth is told.
 And that is where your hand may scoop its fill;
 Some of that kind there are who have good will
 For youth and beauty such as yours, my dear;
 You do not know what blows you deal, I fear;
 Your eyes now lofty and now on the ground,
 They fail to see all those whom they sore wound:
 One tells me this who dares not speak to you!
 With "smoke-vendors" (*vendeurs de fumée*). Cf. our "hot air peddler,"
 "hot air merchant," etc.

Regnier, whom this execrable Macette desired to get rid of, to the advantage of someone who would have paid dearly for his place, was unable to restrain a movement of wrath, and the old woman, turning at the noise, perceived the presence of a witness whom she feared. She lifted the siege upon the instant, and hastened to leave, saying in a low voice: "I will see you tomorrow, *adieu, bonsoir, ma fille!*" The poet was tempted to take vengeance with his own hands on this enemy of his amours and of his happiness, but he undoubtedly did not wish to make his mistress blush by letting her know that he had heard the fine advice to which she should not have listened. He pursued with his maledictions the old procuress, who had accused him of frequenting bad houses, and who had been so determined to deprive him of his mistress's heart. It was of this heart that he thought, a heart at once simple and tender, noble and generous, now defiled with thoughts of vice and already won over to Prostitution. Macette had won out over Regnier, who, desolated and furious at being supplanted by a rival whose only merit was his money, proceeded to stigmatize, in violent verse, the vile old woman whom the demon of lust had sent as ambassador to a poor and honest young girl. Following are a few strophes of the *Ode sur une vieille maquereille*:

*Esprit errant, ame idolastre,
Corps verolé, couvert d'emplastre,
Aveuglé d'un lascif bandeau;
Grande nymphe à la harlequine,
Qui s'est brisé toute l'eschine
Dessus le pavé d'un bordeau! . . .**

*Fickle mind, idolatrous soul,
Body covered with *vérole*,
Lascivious fillet over eye;
A female harlequin very fine,
With a very battered spine
From the floor of brothel sty.

*Je veux que partout on t'appelle
Louve, chienne et ourse cruelle,
Tant decà que delà les monts;
Je veux que de plus on ajoute:
Voilà le grand diable qui joute
Contre l'enfer et les demons.*

*Je veux qu'on crie emmy la rue:
Peuple, gardez-vous de la grue,
Qui destruit tous les esguillons,
Demandant si c'est aventure
Ou bien un effet de nature,
Que d'accoucher des ardillons.*

*De cent dons elle fut formée,
Et puis, pour en estre animée,
On la frotta de vif-argent:
Le fer fut première matière,
Mais meilleure en fut la dernière,
Qui fist son cul si diligent.*

*I would have them call you a bitch,
Wolf and ass with cruel itch:
I should like them all to tell;
And I would have them add, what's more,
There's the big devil of a whore
Who fights the devils and all Hell.

I would have the street-crier call:
People, guard you, guard you all,
For this hawk destruction likes,
Demanding if 'tis Nature's work,
And not, rather, sport or quirk,
To give birth to iron spikes.

Of a hundred gifts her shape was made
And then, to give life to this jade,
They rubbed her with quicksilver, last:
Of iron was built her skeleton,
But the last thing was best done,
Which made her old rump work so fast.

*Depuis, honorant son lignage,
Elle fit voir un beau menage
D'ordure et d'impudicitez;
Et puis, par l'excès de ses flammes,
Elle a produit filles et femmes
Au champ de ses lubricitez. . . .*

*Vieille sans dent, grand' hallebarde,
Vieux baril à mettre moutarde,
Grand morion, vieux pot cassé,
Plaque de lit, corne à lanterne,
Manche de lut, corps de guiterne,
Que n'est-tu déjà in pace?*

*Vous tous qui, malins de nature,
En desirez voir la peinture,
Allez-vous-en chez le bourreau;
Car, s'il n'est touché d'inconstance,
Il la fait voir à la potence
Ou dans la salle du bordeau!**

*She has been faithful to her line;
She keeps a ménage very fine
Of ordurous impudicities;
Her flames have flurred so very high,
They've brought more women to the sty,
More girls for her lubricities.

Toothless old wretch and halbert great,
Mustard-barrel and withered crate,
Old morion and broken jug,
Skinny bedslat, lantern-horn,
Lute-neck or ship's prop forlorn,
Why do we still see your mug?

Then all you, friends to evil's blight,
Who would view her portrait bright,
You've but to pass the hangman by;
If he's not faithless to his task,
On the scaffold you'll see her bask,
Or in the hall of brothel-sty.

The vengeance of Regnier thus immortalized the name of *Maquette*, which became from then on a synonym of the word *maquerelle*, a synonym which the written and spoken language still keeps in the vocabulary of the servants' halls. The poet was not yet made wise, despite the unfortunate issue of his amours, despite his unkindly infirmities, despite his premature old age. And yet, if he always felt the same passion for women, he did not go to seek satisfaction for his passion in the same places; he avoided the houses of perdition, he looked better after his health, and he no longer ran blindly in the pursuit of pleasure as he once had done, he tells us,

*Du temps que ma jeunesse, à l'amour trop ardente,
Rendoit d'affection mon âme violente,
Et que de tous costez, sans choix ou sans raison,
J'allois comme un limier après la venaison.**

In an epistle to the Sire of Forqueveux, which is not, as has been supposed, a pseudonym for the Sire of Esternod, or of Desternaud, he develops, with a cynicism which is not lacking in naïveté, his novel theory of love; he always had a marked aversion for great ladies; he does not care "to serve, hat in fist;" he does not care to be in the galleys, like a convict; what he prefers is

*. . . Une jeune fillette
Experte dès longtemps à courir l'eguillete,
Qui soit vive et ardente au combat amoureux. . . ,
La grandeur en amour est vice insupportable,†*

*In the days of my youth, when a passion too quick
Rendered my soul all too ardent and sick,
And when, on all sides, without choice, without reason,
I ran like a hound after deer in the season.

† . . . A young maid,
Long expert in the duties of her trade,
Lively and ardent in the jousts of love . . .
For haughtiness in love is very nice,

*Et qui sert hautement est tousjours misérable:
Il n'est que d'estre libre, et en deniers comptans,
Dans le marché d'amour acheter du bon temps,
Et, pour le prix commun, choisir sa marchandise. . . .**

M. Viollet-Leduc, in his edition of Regnier (Paris, P. Jannet, 1854, in-18), says with reason, of this epistle: "It would be difficult to excuse Regnier his choice of subject, if it were not for the manner of his treating it. This work can give us but a very bad opinion of his native delicacy and his manners."

Regnier felt that he was an old man, though he was not yet forty years old; he had also become fearful as to the risks he ran, and he was quite willing to leave, as an heritage to his successors—"to the mignons," he tells us, "blind in such a sport"—

*Les boutons du printemps et les autres fleurettes,
Que l'on cueille au jardin des douces amourettes.†*

He had a horror for apothecaries' remedies, mercury, *l'eau forte*, *l'eau de gayac* and the sudorifics, which had deprived him of "his substance;" he was crippled in an arm and a leg: "like a mariner escaped from the storm," he had sworn never again to embark on the sea of Prostitution, and he dreamed of finding happiness in a sure and peaceable commerce with "a simple mistress" but he could not realize this dream until after he had left the hands of his *refondeurs*. "Regnier," reports Talle-
mant des Réaux, in the *Historiettes* of Desportes, "died at thirty-nine years, at Rouen, where he had gone to be treated for the syphilis by one Sonneur. When he was cured, he wanted to give a dinner to his physicians. He served new wine of Spain, and they, out of complacency, permitted him to drink; he had of it

*Not to be borne, and miserable thrice:
There's nothing like freedom in the mart of love,
For one who is all bargaining above
And at the common tariff picks his goods.

†The buds of spring and all the other flowers
Which one picks in love's sunny garden hours.

a pleurisy which carried him off in three days (22d of October, 1613).” This great satirist, wholly debauched as he was, was, none the less, loved and praised by his contemporaries, no one thinking to reproach him for the license of his poems, which were not as free as those of Sigongne, Desternod, Motin and Théophile. Although Regnier may be placed at the head of the poets of Prostitution, we must remember that in his time, as M. Violet-Leduc observes, in his *Histoire de la Satire en France*, “the very name of *satire* indicated an obscene work.” The austere Boileau failed to take account of the manners and customs of the time, when he said of Regnier, in his *Art poétique*:

*Heureux si dans ses vers, pleins de verve et de sel,
Il ne menait souvent les muses au bordel,
Et si du son hardi de ses rimes cyniques
Il n’alarmait souvent les oreilles pudiques!**

But, in order not to incur, himself, the reproach which he addresses to the creator of Macette and of the *Mauvais Gîte*, Boileau changes thus the expression of the first two verses, by weakening them, without in the least changing the judgment which he had pronounced on his master in satire:

*Heureux si ses discours, craints du chaste lecteur,
Ne se sentaient des lieux que fréquentait l’auteur!†*

*Happy if in his verse, full of salt and of verve,
His muse to the brothel did not too often swerve,
And if at his cynical boldness of rhyme,
Modest ears were not shocked greater part of the time.

†Happy if but his style, which chaste readers fear,
Did not smell of a place to the author too dear.

CHAPTER XLIII

MATHURIN REGNIER is not the only poet of this epoch in whom we find a fresh and lively picture of Prostitution. The majority of the poets who were his contemporaries and imitators did not in the least fear to dishonor themselves by frequenting wine-shops and bad houses, and so it was altogether natural that their manners should be reflected in their works. Moreover, the sort of poetry which was approved at that time by the readers of the best society affected the form and tone of satire, even when it did not assume the name. "The authors, and probably the public," says M. Violet-Leduc, in his *Histoire de la Satire en France*, "were then of the false persuasion, due to ill-made or superficial studies, that the style of satire ought to conform to the supposed language of the *satyrs*, those lascivious divinities of the Greeks." Hence, the obscenity, or, at least, the license, of the majority of satirical verses. It is not our plan to seek in the poets of the school of Regnier all that might be found there which would provide us with much information and curious details relative to the history of public morality at the beginning of the seventeenth century; we merely desire to choose, from a few collections of satires published about that time, various pictures of manners which will complete that which Regnier has painted for us, after nature, in his *Macette* and in his *Mauvais Gîte*. These extracts, borrowed from rare and little-known books, will show under new aspects the essentially mobile physiognomy of Prostitution, although we are always to recognize, in those satires which we shall now run through from this point of view, the evident intention of competing advantageously with the author of *Macette*, in the invasion of the filthy domain preempted by his libertine genius.

The Sire of Esternod is the first to offer a very inferior, and yet a remarkable, imitation of the Macette, which had been so applauded that it kept all the poets awake nights. Claude d'Esternod or Desternod, was not, as has been believed, the pseudonym of François de Fourquevaux, friend of Regnier; it was the name of a good gentleman of Salins, who did not begin courting the Muses until after a youth passed in the career of arms; his poetry, therefore, smells of the rude license of his former trade. Although he was governor of the Château of Ornans in Burgundy, this military post left him sufficient leisure to permit him to come to Paris, where his relations with the poets frequently drew him into debauchery; but although these poets were, the majority of them, atheists or "epicureans," like Théophile and Berthelot, he continued to associate with his licentiousness a great piety and an almost fanatic zeal for religion. In one of the pieces of his *Espadon satirique*, printed for the first time at Lyons in 1619, d'Esternod brands, with a brutal and soldier-like energy, "the hypocrisy of a woman, who feigned to be devout and who was found to be a whore." This woman, whom he does not name, was one of those who cover their turpitudes with a mask of virtue, and who are as much esteemed by the world as they ought to be despised, if their conduct were known. There were then many more hypocrites of this sort than are to be found today, and d'Esternod was no dupe where their wiles and falsehoods were concerned:

*Et telle est au sermon tant que le jour nous luit,
Que j'ay veue au bordeau tout le long de la nuit.
Or une j'en cognois de semblable farine,
Qui est une Laïs et fait de la Pauline.**

He sketches for us the portrait of this debauchée, who "plays the pious and plucks the lousy," distributes alms when she knows

*I see one in the church at matin song
Whom I have seen in the brothel all night long,
Yes, seems to me, that powdered face I've seen:
She's Laïs there, and here she is Pauline.

she is being watched, speaks only of holy water, indulgences and jubilees, is incessantly counting the beads of her rosary and does not appear even to think of the vanities of this world nor the works of Satan. One night, the Sire of Esternod leaves his house, "sad, downcast and pensive," and with an empty purse; this last, indeed, was the cause of his sadness, for he had had ill luck at gaming and had not been left even a six-crown piece

*Pour celles qui m'avoient jadis presté leur flus.**

He went then, *pedetentim*, hunched over like an old man and reflecting on his penury, which prevented his putting in an appearance in a place where everything had to be paid for. He walked where chance led him, scratching his perruque, without being able to think up a decent expedient for obtaining money or a plan for doing without it. Suddenly, he heard the approach of robbers, and in order to avoid them, although he had nothing to lose except his cloak, he took refuge in a dark alley and hid himself under the lean-to of a house. A window opened above his head; he gave a leap, "fearing the odor of amber,

Et d'estre parfumé de quelque pot de chambre."†

But the chambermaid cried to him from above: "Hello Monsieur! I will be down right away to open the door!" He did not reply, for he supposed that her remarks were addressed to someone else, and he was about to take a discreet departure, when the door opened and the chambermaid said to him in a low voice: "Enter, Monsieur, *sans feu ni sans chandelle?*" He could not doubt that he had been taken for another; he hesitated to pursue the adventure; but at the moment when he was about to retire, someone pushed him within and the door closed upon him. Then he resigned himself and permitted himself to be conducted to the bed of "madame" who was waiting for him, or, at least, was waiting

*For the girls who formerly would have lent me all.

†And being perfumed with some chamber pot.

for another, between the covers. She addressed him as though he were an old acquaintance; the matter had gone too far to retrace his steps, and he went to bed without saying a word.

The Sire of Esternod commenced to repent not having demanded a light, for he began to conceive terrible suspicions concerning the age of his companion. Finally, when he was quite convinced that he was dealing with some toothless old wretch, he decided to quit the party. He arose brusquely, without excusing himself for his impoliteness. The old woman, surprised and outraged by this proceeding, cried out and called to Jacqueline to light the candle. She hid herself under the covers when she saw d'Esternod, who had never met her upon such a footing as this, and who smiled as he recognized the devout lady of the church. "Bonjour, Mademoiselle!" he said to her, in a bantering tone.—"*Quel grand diable, mon Dieu! go away!*" cried the old woman in despair.

"—*Ma fortune maudite,
Qui vouloit que je sceus qu'estiez une hypocrite!*"*

She was desolated; she supplicated him to be discreet, and not to betray an honest woman, whom he had it in his power to ruin; he reassured her and rallied her, at the same time:

. . . . *Madame, n'ayez peur,
Qu'en ma discretion vostre secret repose,
Car mon honneur y est plus que vous engagé.
M'estimerait-on pas quelque diable enragé?*†

Despite these fine promises, he saw to it that his silence was paid for, and did not leave the house until he had laid his hands

*"The evil luck on me does sit:
How should I know you were a hypocrite!"

†Madame, have no fear:
Your secret in my keeping is quite safe;
My honor is involved as much as yours.
Do you think it is a devil here who roars?

upon ten crowns as the price of his services. He did not even have the modesty to let it be understood that he intended to distribute this money to the poor! The ignoble dènouement of this adventure does not give us a very flattering opinion of the Sire of Esternod, who was not at all slow in publishing his sorry good fortune. There is ground for supposing that he did not even conceal the name of the lady, for he puts into verse his adventures with this old dame, in order to recompense her for the "good offices" which he owed her:

*Bref, je te suis tant redevable,
Vieille, plus fine que le diable,
Pour avoir fait l'amour pour moy,
Que tu seras mon connestable,
Et mise à la première table
Si quelque jour on me fait roy.*

*Qu'à la teigne, qu'à la podagre,
Ala migraine, à la chiragre,
De t'offenser soit interdit!
Et, après la mort filandière,
Deux asnes, dans une litière,
Te portent droit en paradis!**

This sire of Esternod, who had won his first poetic spurs with the harness of a soldier on his back, still preserved, in his manners and his language, all the grossness of his ancient trade; he

*In brief, I am so wholly yours,
Old lady, finest of all whores,
For having done this little thing,
That you my constable shall be
And eat at the same board with me,
If some day I am king.

Ringworm and gout be far from you,
Headache and chiragra, too,
And all that is not nice!
And when death comes to take you there,
Two asses and a litter bear
Your body straight to paradise!

did not reckon with his purse, when he desired to purchase new fruit in the market place of Prostitution. He avenges himself in acrid and venomous verses, on a woman whom he calls *la belle Madeleine*, who had refused to sell herself for fifty pistoles. It may be believed, from certain passages in the piece, that this woman was being preserved, as the saying was, "for the mouth" of a great lord, and that the "old priestesses," or procuresses, who had discovered her in a provincial village were counting on doing a good business with her. In any case, she was well watched over, and the Sire of Esternod knocked in vain at her door. Furious at this resistance, he exhausted his wrath in a poem, bearing the mint of the bad houses; he massed his invectives to crush the poor wretch, "who would have none of him," into the gutter. He pictures her as old and decrepit, abandoned by her lovers, "rotten, gnarled, broken-winded and cross-eyed," regretting her past life and recalling with regret the good bargains which she had refused and which she would never find again:

*Tu tiendras ces memes paroles:
 "Où sont les cinquante pistoles
 Que jadis on me présentait?
 Las! où sont les roses vermeilles?
 Que n'ai-je pris par les oreilles
 Le loup, alorees qu'il s'arrestoit!"**

The old age of dissolute women was, undoubtedly, disrespectful enough; d'Esternod appears always inflexible on this point. He especially did not pardon old sinners, who, in place of repenting the errors of their youth, still sought, thanks to lying graces of the toilet, to practice deception in amours; he took pleasure in fustigating with the lash of satire

*You shall mumble the same words o'er:
 "Oh, where are those pistoles of yore,
 The fifty that were offered me?
 Alas! Where are the roses red?
 If I had seized Time's wolfish head,
 Before he had a chance to flee!"

Ces lasches demoiselles

*Qui replastrent leurs fronts, durissent leurs mamelles,
Reverdissent leur sein, leur peau vont corroyant,
Alignent leurs sourcils, leurs cheveux vont poudrant,
Vermillonnent leur joue, encroustent leurs visages. . . .**

D'Esternod took Regnier for a model, as well as those poets of the tavern and the bordeau who were his friends and rivals; the same sort of evil and unbridled life would naturally produce the same sort of poetry; but there was, between Regnier and d'Esternod, all the distance which separated Paris from the chateau of Ornans. The author of the *Espadon satyrique* does not fail to encounter, in the suspect places, those shameful maladies which were the inevitable satellites of debauchery. Following the example of Regnier, he is not ashamed to celebrate his misadventures in verse; but in that smutty ode, which displays a verve of which the poet might have made better use, Regnier is quite surpassed. The Sire of Esternod possessed the brutal frankness of a soldier; he made use of it to denounce to the public the mangy sheep which he would like to have chased from the fold of Prostitution. He does not repent having lived a disorderly life, but he blames himself for having trusted a miserable old woman, who had "worn the mitre a thousand times" in the public streets. Incurrible libertine that he is, he exclaims,

*N'estois-je pas un vrai Jocrisse,
De contenter là mes amours!†*

Satires were the fashion of the time, and the satirists, without caring whether or not they made their readers blush, never for-

* . . . Those maids unblest
Who plaster their faces and pad out the breast,
Making their bosoms and their skin more fair,
Lining their brows and powdering their hair,
Rouging their cheeks and laying on a crust . . .

†Should I not be a true Jack-Pudding,
To satisfy my amours there!

got to pursue, among all vices, that of debauchery, or to pillory Prostitution.

One of these satirists, Thomas de Courval-Sonnet, was a little Norman squire, who, coming from Brie to Paris under the reign of Maria de'Medici to study medicine, set himself to making verses against the manners of the capitol. The reading of his poems, in which he shows himself animated by a hatred of evil as by a love of good, gives us a very honorable idea of his character and his sentiments, in spite of trivial expressions and cynical images, which fill these works dedicated to the queen. This was the taste of the century, and the language of the courts themselves would appear to have been borrowed from the Courts of Miracles. We may believe, however, that Courval-Sonnet did not live in mire, like the majority of his confreres in satire; the theory may be advanced that he led a very regular life, and that he was never soiled with the filth of the bad houses. His first collection, which appeared in 1620 (Paris, Rolet-Boutonné, octavo), evidences a sort of aversion and defiance on the part of the author toward women in general. In *Satire VI*, entitled *Censure des femmes*, he gives us a portrait unattractive enough of the fair sex, whom he crushes beneath a load of insulting metaphors:

*L'enfer de nos esprits, le paradis des yeux,
L'aube de tous ennuis, tombeau des langoureux,
Purgatoire assuré des bourses trop pesantes,
Repurgées et netyes (sic) aux flames plus ardentes
Et aux cuisants fourneaux de ce sexe amoureux
Qui droit à l'hospital rend l'homme comme un gueux.**

*Hell of our minds, the paradise of eyes,
Dawn of ennui and tomb of all our sighs,
The purgatory sure of weighty purse,
Purged in the all too ardent flames, and worse,
That flare in the furnace of this amorous sex,
Which to the almshouse sends us all as wrecks.

The Sire of Courval-Sonnet, in his capacity as a physician, desires to correct the debauches by the pictures he draws of the material ravages which the *femme d'amour* too frequently wreaks on the person of her accomplice:

*Elle gaste la fleur de la verte jeunesse,
Déflore la beauté, advacne la vieillesse;
Elle ride la peau, rend le front farineux,
Jaunit nostre beau teint, le plumbe et rend squameux:
J'entends, quand par excès le mestier on pratique,
Dans un bordeau lascif, avec femme publique.**

The poet has, always, a qualification to make in advance, by saying that he is full of respect for virtuous ladies, and that he addresses himself solely to women of bad manners. If we are to believe him, Prostitution was everywhere, and the greatest ladies did not disdain to "take up the trade" (*se mettre au métier*). He compares the amorous woman to a bark on which the river of youth† is descended:

*De mesme, nous voyons tant de bonnes commeres,‡
Ne servoit qu'à un seul! Mais ce sexe infidele,
Inconstant et leger, s'abandonne souvent
Au premier qui demande à passer le torrent
Des amoureux plaisirs
De mesme, nous voyons tant de bonnes commeres,‡*

*She spoils the finest flower on youth's green page,
Destroys all beauty and advances age;
She wrinkles the skin and makes the forehead white,
The complexion yellows or with scales doth blight:
By which I mean, excessive custom given
In brothel low to public dame unshriven.

†Cf. Joseph Delteil's *Sur le Fleure Amour*.

‡If only this skiff, this boat, this bark or wherry
Did serve but one! But the sex unfaithful very,
Changeful and light, too often does afford
A passage to the first who comes aboard,
Upon the amorous stream
And so, we see so many good godmothers

*En servant de bateau, se rendre mercenaires,
 Et mettre leur honneur, comme on dit, à l'encan,
 Pour gagner une cotte ou un riche carcan,
 Une bourse au mestier, des gands en broderie,
 Une bague, un collet ou autre braverie.
 Rien que meschanceté ne sort de leur boutique,
 Et rare est le bienfaict qu'une putain pratique!*

But Courval-Sonnet revises himself at once; he fears that he has outraged all women by unveiling the misdemeanors of the few, and he hastens to make them an honorable reparation. Following is the manner in which he individualizes his epigrams, which had had a tendency to be too general, and which had appeared to refer to the entire sex:

*Ce discours seulement s'adresse aux vicieuses!**

The poet implies by "*vicieuses*" the women of bad manners who did not care in what fashion they gained a testoon or a crown.

*Afin de piaffer et se faire paroistre
 Aux lieux plus frequentez où l'on se fait connoistre,
 Comme à l'église, au bal et banquets sumptueux,
 Tournois, courses de bague et theatriques jeux,
 Aux marches, assemblées et festes de village,†*

Become a mercenary craft for others,
 Putting their honor on the auction block
 To gain a carcanet or charming frock,
 A purse or gloves embroidered make a bawd,
 A ring, a collar or some other gaud.
 Nothing but evil in their shop you'll find:
 Rare is a good deed in the whorish kind.

*To the vicious only are these words addressed!

†Who paw the ground and always must be seen
 In crowded places, there to play the queen,
 To church, to ball, to banquet they must fling,
 Theatre, tourney, runnings at the ring;
 At market, assemblage or the village feast

*Où libres on les voit jouer leur personnage,
 Le front couvert de fard, pour gagner des mignons
 Et prendre dans leurs rets tousjours nouveaux poissons;
 Ou bien à ces putains, tant hors qu'en mariage,
 Qui riches de moyens, entretiennent à gages
 Quelque bel Adonis, quelque muguet de cour,
 Pour leur donner plaisir et les saouler d'amour.
 Qui quelquefois sera caché dans la ruelle
 D'un lict, toujours au guet, en crainte et en cervelle,
 Sans tousser ni cracher, peur d'estre decouvert
 Soit du mary jaloux ou de l'amant couvert.*

Thus, in this *Censure des femmes*, which is not equal to the famous satire of Boileau on the same subject, the Sire of Courval describes, especially, two species of Prostitution which were very common at that epoch; the prostitution of women and that of men, one and the other having no other object except to contribute to the upkeep of the vile artisans of debauchery. The women, whose ambition did not exceed a testoon or a crown for each conquest, prostituted themselves to whomsoever would pay for it; the despicable men, who carried on a trade almost** as abject, did not prostitute themselves, on the other hand, except to a single woman, who paid or "kept" them. The role of gallants of this sort was not limited to satisfying secretly the brutal passions of a few old libertines: the mercenary being, attached to the service of a vicious woman, must also escort her to the ballets, dance with her and escort her home, in order to obtain

They play their part and never are the least,
 Rouged for the mignons whom to snare they wish,
 Spreading their nets to catch always new fish;
 And then there are those whores, both in and out
 Of marriage, who their means substantial flout
 For some Adonis, lily of the court,
 Who'll give them pleasure and good amorous sport,
 And who, while he lies hidden in the bed,
 Fears for his life and for his craven head;
 He dares not cough or spit, lest he be revealed
 To jealous husband or sweetheart concealed.

**Sic.

. . . *Le bas de soie ou l'habit de satin,
Les jartiers dentelez, l'eschar pe en broderie.**

It is true, that at the expense of his chérie, the gallant

. . . *Brave et s'entretient
En habits fort pompeux, sans desbourser argent.†*

Is it not hard to conceive how a work written in this style could have been dedicated to the queen mother, to that Maria de' Medici, who, wholly Italian as she was, never underwent the least reproach in her manners? Is it not hard to see how the Sire of Courval, who prided himself on being a gentleman of good family, could have introduced into his moral poems the unclean jargon of the bordeaux? It must be stated, in his excuse, that the language of decent folk had not yet been formed, and that the most obscene word had a right to a place even in a sermon, and all the more in poetry, which made use of its old privilege of saying everything.

The Sire of Courval-Sonnet frequently exaggerates things, overstresses details and lays on his color a bit too thick, when, for example, he shows us *les epoux*,

*Se mettant en hezard, aux bordeaux, aux estaples,
De gagner, par argent, le royaume de Naples;‡*

but he does not step beyond the confines of the most scrupulous verity when he turns his master hand to giving us the portrait of a courtesan who had been famous, and who, upon becoming old, had returned to the obscure and miserable station from which she

*Stockings of silk or cloak of satin make,
Fine-jeweled garters or embroidered scarf.

† Bravely steps forth
In pompous habits, with no cost to him.

‡ Trying their luck in the brothel and its staples,
To gain through gold the kingdom of all Naples.

started. It is to this courtezan that he addresses his XXVth. Satire:

*Les chalands degoutez tournent ailleurs leurs pas.
 Tu vois diminuer tous les jours ta pratique:
 Comme ce procureur, ferme donc ta boutique,
 C'est bien force, à present que tu n'es plus des belles,
 Que tu sois à present vendeuse de chandelles.
 La femme est laide, après qu'elle a trente ans vecu:
 Les roses à la fin deviennent gratte-cu.**

This latter piece of verse is still remembered by everybody, without any precise knowledge as to its sense or the author to whom it is to be attributed. Courval-Sonnet advises this ancient *fille d'amour* to profit from what is left her; to get, swindle and ensnare money by all possible means; to seek to work upon her dupes by telling them that she fears the sergeant and that she has put her petticoat and her *hongreline* in pawn; and finally, to lay up a little which will enable her to live by the work of her hands in her old age. But she does not listen out of this ear, and she cannot foresee that a day will come when the resources of Prostitution will wholly fail her; she cannot doubt, however, that she has become old, and she grows angry against the importunate giver of advice: 'Enné!' she cries.

*Puisque j'ay de quoy vivre et de quoy m'habiller,†
 Le plus aisé travail pour moy n'est qu'un supplice;
 Puisque j'ay de quoy vivre et de quoy m'habiller,*

*Disgusted buyers turn their steps elsewhere.
 You see your custom falling off each day:
 Then better shut up shop and go your way,
 Since you're no longer beautiful, old dear,
 Why, candle-selling is your trade, I fear.
 Woman is ugly when she's thirty-some,
 And roses, in the end, a *gratte-cu* become.

†“Let no one wait until I sew or weave:
 At the lightest labor, I am sure, I'd grieve;
 So long as I have clothes upon my back,

*Qu'on me parle de rire, et non de travailler.
 Tout mon contentement est d'estre bien ornée:
 Une femme d'amour vit au jour la journée.*

The Sire of Courval does not endeavor to talk the language of reason to her any more, for the habit of vice has with her become incurable; he therefore invites her with irony to persevere in the path in which she is already so far gone; no remorse, no regret; each one here below has his destiny; that of a courtesan is to die a courtesan.

*Pratique habilement, en te moquant de moy,
 Tous les tours du bordel que tu sçais sur le doy . . .
 Tu possedes un peigne, un charlit, un miroir,
 Une table à trois pieds qu'il fait assez bon voir,
 Un busc, un esventail, un vieux verre sans patte,
 De l'eau d'ange, du blanc, de la poudre, une chatte,
 Une paire de gands qui furent jadis neufs,
 Une boîte d'onguent, une houppe, des noeuds,
 Un poilon, un chaudron, une écuelle, une assiette;
 Pour te servir de nappe, un engin de serviette.**

This description of the ménage of a daughter of joy at the beginning of the seventeenth century would be very exact today if it were applied to the majority of public women of low degree. These creatures have no more changed in physiognomy than they

Talk but of joy to me, not labor's wrack.
 My only care is myself to adorn:
 An amorous lady must look well each morn."

*You show your cleverness in mocking me;
 You know the brothel tricks, I plainly see . . .
 You have a comb, a mirror and the rest,
 A three-legged table of the very best,
 A busk, a pan, a glass without a stem,
 Perfume and powder, how you cherish them!
 A cat, a pair of gloves which once were new,
 An ointment box, a tassel—motley crew!
 A kettle and a bowl, a lonely plate,
 A battered napkin for your meals of state.

have in trade and manner of life. Courval-Sonnet continues to depict them all, after nature, under the traits of one who had arrived at the age of decadence:

*Tu n'apaises ta faim d'aucun friand morceau:
Ta viande est du pain, ton breuvage est au seau;
En esté, tu remplis ton ventre de salades;
Extremement habile à bailler des cascades,
A faire niche à l'un et l'autre caresser,
A tirer un present; cela fait, le chasser;
Insensible aux bienfaits, conteuse de sornettes,
Impudente menteuse et qui sait ses deffaites;
Ton mestier est infame et doux infiniment;
C'est pourquoy l'on n'en sort que difficilement.**

The Sire of Courval-Sonnet left Paris as soon as he had obtained his doctorate at the Faculty of medicine; he was no longer young; but he had escaped all the storms of youth. He settled at Rouen, there to take up the practice of his art, but while healing the sick, he all the while composed satires, and these satires always had as object the correction of manners, which would not appear to have been any better in the provinces than they were at the capital. It was at Rouen that he published, under the veil of anonymity, those *Exercises de ce temps*, which had the honor of a number of successive editions (by Lehay, 1627, octavo; by Laurens Maurry, 1631, quarto; by Delamare, 1645, octavo), but the poet did not dream of correcting the gross character of his style. These *exercises* are very curious sketches of manners, in which we find a number of details that belong to a

*You feed your hunger with no morsel fine:
Your rations bread and in a pail your wine;
With salads you did once your belly fill—
Ah, you were clever, when you had the will,
At making love and getting all love's gain,
And then at getting rid of the well-plucked swain;
A graceless wretch, a teller of small tales,
An impudent old liar, by the scales;
Your trade of infamy does like you well,
And that is why 'tis hard to quit your hell.

history of Prostitution. "Courval has not imitated Regnier in what there is that is blameworthy in the latter," says M. Viollet-Leduc (*Catalogue des livres composant sa Bibliothèque poétique*, with bibliographical, biographical and literary notes, Paris, Hachette, 1843, octavo); "he has not even taken the pains to conceal his thefts: his *Débauché* and his *Ignorant* are, evidently, modeled upon the Xth. and XIth. satires of Regnier; in his capacity as physicians, he makes an immoderate use of unclean terms and descriptions, to the point of disgust." We shall here concern ourselves with three satires, the first, fifth and the eleventh, entitled, respectively, *le Bal*, *la Promenade* and *le Débauché*.

We see, from the first that there existed in the seventeenth century, public balls sufficiently like those which are now the mode at Paris and in the great cities in France,* and that these exercised an unfortunate influence over the people. In the time of Courval-Sonnet, one went to such balls as these to seek adventure. Here is the manner in which he pictures them for us, in a satire in which he himself takes the stage:

*Les desirs depravez se descouvrent au bal,
Salle de la desbauche où jadis la jeunesse
Alloit comme au bordel chercher une maistresse.
On n'y voit que flambeaux, que brilliants, que beautez,
Cupidons en campagne, amours de tous costez
L'un y va pour danser, l'autre a d'autres desseins;
L'un y cherche une femme et l'autre des maistresses. . . †*

We see that the Sire of Courval-Sonnet had not become any more respectable in his language on returning to his native prov-

*For a description of Parisian dance-halls in this age of jazz, see *Danse, Danseurs, Dancings* by Léon Werth. These places are now known as *Dancings*.

†Depraved desires at the ball transpire,
House of debauch, where our youth go to seek
Their mistresses, as in the brothel's reek.
Torches and brilliance, beauties everywhere:
All cupid's company is surely there. . . .
Some go to dance, and some for other reasons;
One seeks a wife and one a mistress merely.

ince; but he no longer dedicates his verses to the queen, who was probably not grateful to him for the former dedication. The poet-physician devotes his second collection to what is, undoubtedly, a satire on Norman manners. The licentious ball to which he introduces his reader is sufficiently like the *musicos** of Holland; we may suppose that this ball was established at Rouen, where the author then dwelt. Courval-Sonnet there meets a woman, with whom he enters into a conversation that soon turns to gallantry; he presses his point and makes propositions which are a little too lively; these the lady at first rejects with indignation. "What!" she cries, with an air of modesty, "Speak to me of love? I am a good woman!"

*Et deux heures devant, auprès des chambrières,
Un jeune cavalier lui tailloit des croupières!†*

However, after a few shows of prudish resistance, she is soon on familiar terms enough with the new gallant, who offers her refreshments, which she does not refuse. She eats and drinks then as though her belly had been empty since the night before. In her gluttony, she so overloads her stomach that she is soon forced to leave the ball in order to relieve herself of a portion of her indigestible burden; but barely is she somewhat relieved when she reenters the hall and recommences her visits to the buffet; the good mouthfuls which she swills down now no longer inconvenience her, and she feels that she is sufficiently prepared to undergo the fatigues of the night. It is in this state that the Sire of Courval leads her away from the ball, whispering to her:

*Si chaste on en revient, c'est grand coup d'aventure;
De la table al la danse, et de la danse au lict.‡*

*A low music-hall, gaff or pot-house.

†And two hours before, like any chambermaid,
A young cavalier had saddled well this jade!

‡'Tis an adventure to make chaste return;
From table to the dance, from dance to bed.

Such was the ball and such the promenade. Our poet there meets a beauty whom he had courted, but who had not left him even a hope. On this day, however, he was kindly received, smiled upon and invited to come and pass the day in a house of pleasure where a joyous company was assembled. Courval-Sonnet did not resist this seductive invitation but accepted his part in the proposed picnic; he mounted a coach beside his charming companion, and let himself be taken, with eyes shut, to a small rustic retreat, where he found already assembled twenty or thirty amorous couples, who did nothing else all the day long except give themselves to pleasure amid the lawns and flowers. It was a saturnalia of debauchery, and the poet pictures it for us with his accustomed cynicism, after having described this place of pleasure.

*Où respire l'amour, où Vénus prit naissance.**

He does not tell us whether or not he follows these bad examples; but while admitting that he remained sufficiently master of his senses to escape the dangers of this voluptuous occasion, he confesses to having been the witness to incredible acts of Prostitution, which took place all about him, and which did not even seek to hide themselves under the transparent veil of modesty. All these brazen lovers renewed, among themselves, the shameful scenes of the ancient mysteries of Isis.

The Sire of Courval keeps nothing from us as to what he saw in this house, which had no cause to envy the most scandalous dens of public Prostitution, if only expression had not failed his ideas, and if he had been able to express in a lively and picturesque manner the strange memories of his promenade in the fields. He preserves for this day of debauchery a disgust and a sadness which render him indignant against the whole feminine sex; for he thus ends his satire, by recalling the famous one of Jean de Meung against women:

*Where breathes love, and Venus has her birth—

*Ainsi s'accroît le vice et pullulle en tous lieux;
Si l'une fait de mal, l'autre ne fait pas mieux,
Car toutes vous serez, vous estes ou vous fustes,
De fait ou de puissance ou de volonte, pustes.**

In the satire which has for title *le Débauché*, the Sire of Courval relates for us in good enough verse a bizarre episode of vagabond Prostitution, which could not have been very rare at this period, when the provinces were traversed by bands of male and female gypsies, living beyond the bounds of society, knowing no bridle nor law and giving themselves from childhood to the most unclean debauchery.† It was among these wandering bands that vicious men went only too often to seek mercenary pleasures and precocious depravations. All the women who were a part of this nomadic population were, from the age of ten, trained to this infamous traffic, and in order to find a virgin among them, it would have been necessary to take them in their earliest infancy. Manners and public health suffered equally from the daily contact of the population with these miserable creatures, who left nothing but defilement in their wake. The Sire of Courval is, perhaps, dramatizing an adventure of his youth, when he paints himself under the name of the *Débauché*, in order to let us know how he had been punished for his first escapade, which served at least to render him wise and to inspire in him a horror for vice:

*Asservy sous la main d'une mère importune,
Fils de famille ensemble et batteur de pavé,‡*

*And so, vice grows and thrives in every place;
If one is bad, another shows worse grace,
And all of you are, have been, or shall be
Strumpets in fact, intent or memory.

†It is to be noted that there are two contradictory traditions popularly prevalent, regarding the Gypsies; one, as stated here, to the effect that they are universally dissolute; the other to the effect that they are preternaturally chaste, and that a Gypsy maid will defend her honor with her life, etc. For an expression of this latter view, see Longfellow's *The Spanish Student*.

‡Reared by a mother's hand importunate,
I in the street did many lessons get;

*Sans argent, sans credit, aux debtes entravé,
 Bouffy d'ambition, d'amour, de frenaisie,
 D'orgueil, de vanité, de folle fantaisie,
 Je prends la clé des champs et sors, d'un grand matin,
 Du logis du patron, sous le bras mon butin,
 Trois testons, deux ducats et dix sols dans ma bourse,
 Des souliers neufs aux pieds pour aider à ma course.*

This was all the fortune of the wandering knight, who left Rouen and all the other good cities of Normandy to go and seek fortune elsewhere. He arrived, one evening, at the town of Saint-Martin (de Boscherville, undoubtedly), and he met there a troop of gypsies who had come to pass the night:

*. . . Blesches et charlatans,
 Bohémiens, mattois, bons joueurs de merelles,
 Joueurs de gobelets, putains et maquerelles.**

girls, women, pages, valets, apes, trained animals, carts filled with drugs, with perfumes, with finery and with merchandise of all sorts, in which the commerce of these cheating (*attrapeurs*) vagabonds consisted. The newcomer approached their wagons "to see their utensils," and above all, to speak to one of their girls

Oui lui ravit le coeur du charme de ses yeux.†

But he was badly enough received by this buxom lass, who snubbed him and threatened to have him brained; she soon

Moneyless, creditless and crushed with debt,
 Ambition, love and frenzy beckoned still;
 Pride, vanity and folly ruled my will;
 And so, I left, upon a morning bright,
 My patron's house, with baggage very light,
 Ten sols, two ducats and three testoons—yea,
 And brand-new shoes to help me on my way.

*Great cheats and charlatans,
 The crafty Gypsies, good at hopscotch game,
 Jugglers and whores and pimps of evil fame.

†Who ravished his heart with the charm of her eyes.

changed her tone and became as complacent as she had been at first sullen and severe. She proffered a more ample acquaintance to this novice who spoke to her of love and conducted him into the room of an inn, where they might pursue a tête-a-tête from which the poor lad was not to profit.

Barely had they mounted to this room and sat down on the edge of the bed, the only seat which offered, when she burst into tears and began to deplore her unhappy fate, telling him that she was a good girl and that she had been kidnapped by these charlatans; she told him it was quite against her will that she was leading so disorderly a life, one as little suited to her sentiments as to her birth.

And there was our young man, waiting and more amorous than ever. He swore to the beauty that he would deliver her from this odious servitude and that he would lead her back to her parents.

A rendezvous was set for that evening; as midnight sounded the two lovers found themselves behind a stable, at a hundred paces from the inn where they both lodged:

*Elle y vient, je m'y trouve: elle a dessous son bras
Un coffret dans lequel elle avoit mis deux draps,
Un morceau de coutil, un peigne, des brassières,
Un demi-ceint d'argent, des gands et des jartières:
C'estoit là son butin, c'estoit là son valliant. . . .**

This passage proves that the women of evil life, expelled from the cities by the ordinance of 1560, had been taken to the country by migratory merchants, comedians and charlatans, who went from place to place displaying their merchandise, of which the filthiest form of Prostitution was always an essential part.

The arrival of a troupe of these gentry must have been, in each village where they stopped, the signal for all sorts of mis-

*She came to meet me there, beneath her arms
A box in which she kept her slender charms,
A bit of ducking, comb and brassière,
A little silver, gloves and garters—there
Was all her booty, all her wealth. . . .

demeanors; and when the civil or ecclesiastical authorities would open their eyes to these excesses, which had suddenly become as widespread as an epidemic in the bosom of a peaceful population, the authors of the scandal would long since have departed, bag and baggage, leaving behind them their dupes and victims.

The girl and her ravisher, who feared being pursued by the gypsies, marched all night long, little burdened, it is true, with apparel or with silver; they arrived at daybreak in a small village, where they believed that at last they would be safe from pursuit; they knocked at the door of the last house in this village; it was a frightful hovel, where wagon drivers and colporteurs dwelt, but the lovers could not have been any happier in a palace than they were in this lodging

*Escarte du chemin et loin du voisinage.**

They were given a room; the girl sent for wine and ham; they drank, they supped, they went to bed; the debauché dropped at once into the most profound slumber. His bed companion did not think of imitating him; she arose noiselessly, when it was quite day, and, crafty one that she was—but let him tell it, as he curses her:

. . . *Au sortir du coucher,
Ayant tiré de moy ce qui m'est le plus cher,
Endormy de travail, las de trop longue veille,
Ivre de ses appas et d'excès de bouteille,
Estendu dans le lit, sans poulx, sans sentiment. . . .
Trousse quille et bagage, et m'enlève ma bourse;
Puis, droit où je la prins, s'en retourne à la course.†*

*Secluded from the road and far from neighbors.

† On leaving the bed,
Having taken all I had while I was dead
From labor and fatigue, drunken at once
With wine and with her charms, and, like a dunce,
Was lying there without a sign of life. . . .
This baggage rose and made off with my purse,
Then went her way, followed only by my curse!

When the poor devil awoke, he stretched out his hand, still half asleep, and found no one by his side. He called, he waited, and then he perceived that his purse was gone with the adventuress, who had not even left him enough to pay their score. He was unable to leave the hostelry except by abandoning a part of his belongings. He was already disgusted with a wandering life, and, ashamed of having, at his first step, fallen into debauchery, he entered the first convent which he found upon his route and demanded hospitality of the monks. His design was to do penance and devote himself to God. He thought thus to tranquilize his troubled conscience, and he would have forgotten, in prayers and self-macerations, the cruel deception he had met with upon his debut in the world of sin, if certain insistent pains had not recalled it to him. He found that he had been left a sad souvenir by the prostitute who had deceived and robbed him; the malady grew worse every day and took on a character more grave. The unfortunate fellow could not even hide the shameful results of his intemperance. He was obliged to renounce the cloister and leave the convent,

*Les bras farcis de galle, et les cuisses, de cloux.**

He was too seriously ill to risk treatment in a city of the province, and he did not have money enough to betake himself to Paris. It is then that he vows to the Eumenides the miserable one who has put a devouring poison into his veins. He exclaims:

*Fille ingrate, maudite, inconstante et sans foy,
Ne te suffisoit-il pas d'enlever ma valise,
M'ayant laissé lassé, gisant nud, en chemise,
Sans m'affliger des maux de tes embrassemens,†*

*With arms all galled and thighs all boils.

†Ungrateful girl, accursed, without faith,
Was it not, then, enough, you wicked flirt,
To take my clothes and leave me but my shirt,
But you must also, with your foul embrace,

*Que tu avois gagnez par trop de changemens,
Impudique Laïs, prestresse de Cythère,
Scaldrine à tous venans, Tisyphone, Mégère! . . .*

The malady had time to make terrible progress before the sorrowful debauché, who suffered like one possessed, was able to put himself into the hands of the physicians of Paris. The treatment was as dolorous as the malady, and when the patient might believe himself cured, he was no longer anything more than a skeleton, a shadow, a decrepit and disgusting old man. He returned in this state to his patron who took pity on him and consented to take him back; he had learned only too well, and at his own great expense, how fatal debauchery is to faith of soul and health of body ever to fall back into the nets of Prostitution.

The Sire Courval-Sonnet, in writing satires with a pen that was frequently dipped in the mire, was animated, at least, by good intention and prided himself on correcting the manners of his time, which the poets of renown had contributed to making more vicious and more corrupt. It might be said that never had French poetry been so licentious, so abominable, as during the regency of Maria de' Medici; it would seem to have had no other purpose than to exalt the delirium of the senses and to celebrate, immodestly, the deeds and gestures of the most infamous dissoluteness. It was the young court which encouraged this degradation on the part of the poets and their trade; it was the court which furnished, through its own misdemeanors, the material for these immodest compositions. It is to be remarked, however, that the first prosecutions directed against a bad book, as an outrage to manners and public decency, dates from this epoch, when the Sigognes, the Motins, the Berthelots, and the Théophiles were defiling the French tongue by forcing it to express horrible obscenities under the mask of the Latin priapic

Defile my body with your shameful trace?
Immodest Laïs, Cythera's priestess true,
Scaldrine, Tisyphone and Megaera, you!

rites. The trial of Théophile and his codefendants, with reference to the *Parnasse Satyrique*, is the point of departure for a whole new jurisprudence, one which classifies obscene works among the excitations to debauchery, and which demands an accounting of the authors as being guilty of attempts at public demoralization. But this jurisprudence, although based upon a high degree of wisdom, had difficulty in establishing itself in France, because it offended the literary habits and was contrary to the spirit of liberty of the French mind. Previously, there had been no suspicion that a crime might exist in connection with the publication of one of these works, which were called *gaillardes*, and which were not subject to any law of decency, so long as they did not touch either politics or religion. Théophile and his friends were so imprudent as to offend religion and to commit a crime which was then known as atheism or epicureanism, in their composition of free poems. These poems were printed by book-dealers, who dared to place their names on the frontispieces of the books they sold, under the eyes of the magistrates, and even in the galleries of the Palace of Justice. These poems were so smutty that we may ask ourselves today how it is the book seller and the author did not blush at being put, so to speak, in such a pillory. The court delighted in such works, and Théophile Viaud, who had come to Paris in 1610 to enter upon a poetic career, received more honor and applause in becoming the laureate of immodesty than all the other writers put together, who had employed their talents only in respectable and moral compositions. Let us repeat once more, with M. Violet-Leduc, that, in those times, by "satire" was understood a piece of free and frequently obscene poetry, and that the satiric poets were those who applied their brazen talents to the hymning of Prostitution. Théophile, in this, was past master, and his unruly manners were only too well reflected in his writings.

Decent folk viewed with indignation these licentious poems, which perverted the youth by offering them dangerous food for the sensual passions. In 1617, the book-seller, Antoine Estoc, had published a 12mo. volume entitled *Recueil des plus*

excellans (sic) vers satyriques de ce temps, trouvez dans les cabinets des sieurs Sigognes, Regnier, Motin, qu'autres plus signales poètes de ce siècle. This collection, in which license of thought disputed that of expression, achieved a prodigious success among libertines. The police, who had not thought of opposing the sale of the first edition, did not any more oppose a reprinting of the work. It was Bellaine, one of the most commendable book-dealers of Paris, who reprinted the collection, greatly augmented, in 1618, under this title: *Cabinet satyrique ou recueil de poèsies gaillardes de ce temps, composées par Sigognes, Regnier, Motin, etc.* These two editions had appeared with the privilege of the king! The publisher (it was Berthelot or Colletet, or Frencicle, and it may be that all three had a hand in the work) announced, in the preface to the edition of 1616, that he was pleased to have rendered it "more perfect and better ordered than the first, in which there had been much inequality, admixture and confusion throughout." The first edition had been sold out in three months (see the Advertisement of the anonymous publisher); the second went almost as rapidly, and the bookseller who had published the one of 1617, Antoine Estoc, proceeded to reprint the *Cabinet Satyrique*, in 1620. Up till then, booksellers, publishers and others had not been disturbed; Théophile, it is true, was condemned to temporary banishment, by reason of his manners rather than his verse, and the knight of the watch had given him, in the month of May, 1619, orders to leave the realm; but he did not dwell long at London, where his reputation and the recommendations of his friends at the court of France, had caused him to be received with much enthusiasm. He, no more than Sigognes, Motin and the other satirists, suffered reproach for having printed licentious verses, which "the connoisseurs of letters and of poetry" had looked upon with a very favorable eye, and which they had seen fit to save from forgetfulness. Théophile was pensioned by the king and by the house of Montmorency;* Motin had a canonry

*Cf. the British author of "Fanny Hill," who was pensioned on condition he produced no more such works!

at Bourges; Sigognes was Governor of Havre. Théophile had the misfortune to become involved in a quarrel with the Jesuit, Garasse, who, in his *Doctrine curieuse des plus beaux esprits de ce temps*, attacked him in the most furious manner, accusing him of atheism and of libertinism. Père Garasse had pushed his hatred and bad faith to the point of falsifying the verses of his enemy, to which he attributed an irreligious sense. Théophile brought to justice the Jesuit and his book, which latter he caused to be seized and suppressed, after having proved, manuscript in hand, that the verses which had been cited to ruin him had been singularly distorted. Garasse did not look upon himself as being beaten; he published his Apology in which he spared neither Théophile nor the "fine spirits of this time or those reputed such." — "Never," he says, (Chapter 12, page 152), "were the impudicities of Carpocras so well known in the cities of Greece as are the impudicities of Viaud, the blasphemes of Lucilio and the impieties of Charron in France." Behind Gerasse there was a powerful Congregation which had sworn the destruction of Théophile: the Jesuits had espoused the quarrel of their confrère, Gerasse, who had inspired them with his own bellicose humor. Under these circumstances, a bookseller put to press a new edition of obscene verses entitled: *Le Parnasse des poètes satyriques, ou Recueil des vers gail-lards et satyriques de nostre temps*. This collection contained a number of pieces of verse with the name of Théophile; they had been inserted in this collection without his knowledge or consent; but the rumor ran about, nevertheless, that the entire collection had come from the hand of Théophile, and before the first copies of the *Parnasse Satyrique* were in circulation, the poet, who had been advised that this shameful publication was attributed to him, had gone himself to denounce this book to the provost of Paris, declaring that there had been printed in it, without his consent, various pieces of verse which he had in reality composed, but which he had not destined for printing. The provost of Paris, by reason of this declaration, rendered a decision against the printer, caused the book to be seized in

the book-shop and the book-seller to be imprisoned and ordered the destruction of the work. This destruction would not appear to have been accomplished, and various copies with new titles and bearing neither name or place of publisher were circulated under cover in Paris, where they were curiously sought after by all libertines. The imprisoned bookseller (we believe it was Pierre Belaine) had declared that Théophile was not without knowledge of the publication of the *Parnasse Satyrique*. Parliament then took up the affair, and Théophile found himself brought to trial as the author of incriminating verses and a condemned work.

There was another Jesuit, Père Voysin, friend of Père Garasse, who denounced Théophile and who produced a number of witnesses in support of his denunciation. Théophile was accused not only of an offense against good manners, but also of atheism, this latter accusation taking precedence over all others, although it was founded only on a few verses, philosophic in character rather than sacrilegious. The poet, in the face of a criminal trial, which his enemies had provoked against him, believed that discretion lay in absence, and his flight, which, as he himself says, "was only from fear, gave rise to a suspicion of crime." The trial took its course, in the absence of the accused. Garasse and the Jesuits pursued the latter with renewed fury, in their books and in their sermons; they reproached him above all with having corrupted the youth* by his poems, by his discourse and by his example. They pictured him as the solitary author of the *Parnasse Satyrique*, although this collection contained the verses of all "the most noted" (*les plus signalés*) contemporary poets. Following are the terms in which the Jesuit, Théophile Raynaud, speaks of this infamous publication, in his treatise, *De Theophilis* (page 229): *Opus item, cui titulus est Parnassus satyricus; supra quasvis Apuleii, Luciani, Romantii a Rosa, ac similium scriptorum, camarinas grave olentissimum, et ad juvenilis pudoris*

*The old charge, of which Socrates was, doubtless, not the first victim.

cladem ac totius honesti exterminium, in diaboli incude fabrefactum, hujus putentissimi ingenii foetus est. Credi vix potest quanta mala spurciloquus iste juventuti intulerit: qua infamibus scriptionibus, quâ colloquiis et consuetudine familiari. Although the *Parnasse Satyrique* was an execrable book and one which well deserved the honor done it of supposing that it had been dictated by the demon of lust, this would not, perhaps, have been sufficient to motivate the condemnation of Théophile, for the printing and sale of obscene books was then altogether tolerated, and we have already seen the kind of books which were even dedicated to the queen, and which appeared with the King's privilege; but there were other grudges against Théophile. It was asserted that he had proclaimed his atheism in the treatise, *De l'Immortalité de l'âme*, which was but an imitation of the *Phedro* of Plato; there was an assured rumor that he had organized a secret society of atheists and libertines, the object of which was to pervert youth by their secret writings and their words; finally, a number of witnesses were presented who declared that they had heard the poet singing his three songs in a "debauch," that is to say, in an orgy, and who stated that they had learned from his own mouth a number of impious verses. It was thus that Parliament came to concern itself for the first time with these detestable books, which so outraged public modesty, and the trial of Théophile soon involved a number of his friends, who had cooperated, more or less, in the *Parnasse Satyrique* and other collections of the same sort. A warrant was issued for Berthelot, Colletet and Frenicle; but it was not executed except in the case of the last named, who was the least guilty, and who made no attempt to escape justice. Berthelot and Colletet took hiding, like Théophile. There is cause for astonishment in the fact that the Sire of Esternod, who had composed verses still more infamous than those of these satiric poets, was not included in the prosecution directed against them.

Parliament was greatly moved by the dangers to youth, thus exposed to the pernicious excitations of obscene poetry, and was

not slow in establishing a system of jurisprudence to protect public morality, classifying among the crimes of *lèse-majesté*, divine and human, the composition and publication of bad books. On the 19th of August, 1623, a sentence was rendered by the Court, the High Chamber and Tournelle, assembled against Théophile, Berthelot, Colletet and Frenicle, "authors of sonnets and verses containing the impieties, blasphemies and abominations mentioned in the very pernicious book entitled *le Parnasse Satyrique*;" Théophile, Berthelot and Colletet, "truly contumacious, attainted and convicted of the crime of divine *lèse-majesté*, for reparation," were condemned "as follows, the said Théophile and Berthelot to be led and conducted from the prison of the Conciergerie, in a tumbril-cart, to the principal door of the church of Nôtre Dame in this city of Paris, and there on their knees, head and feet naked, in their shirts, the rope upon their necks, holding each in their hands a burning torch of the weight of two pounds, to say and declare that very wickedly and abominably, they have composed, caused to be printed and exposed for sale, the book entitled *Le Parnasse Satyrique*, containing blasphemies, sacrileges and abominations there mentioned against the honor of God, His Church and public decency, for which they repent and demand pardon of God, of the King, and of justice; this done, they shall be led to the Place de Grève of this city, and there the said Théophile burned alive, his body reduced to ashes, the said ashes cast to the winds, and the said books also burned, and Berthelot hanged and strangled on a scaffold, which for this purpose shall be there erected, if they can be taken in their persons; if not, the said Théophile shall be punished by figure and representation and Berthelot hanged in effigy by a picture attached to the said scaffold; all and each of their goods are declared acquired and confiscated to whom they may belong, from which and others not subject to confiscation shall be taken the sum of 4,000 pounds in fine, applicable to pious works, as the Court shall advise." As to Frenicle, who was a prisoner, the Procurator-General of the King was to bring a more ample information against him on the points

mentioned against him in the trial. Moreover, "the said Court addresses inhibitions and prohibitions to all persons, of whatever quality and condition they may be, against having and retaining in their houses any copy of the *Parnasse Satyrique*, or other works of the said Théophile, it being also enjoined upon them to bring within twenty-four hours to the criminal jail here any such works, to be burned and reduced to ashes with the provision that those who shall be found in contravention and in whose possession such works shall be seized, shall be declared the authors of the said crime and punished like the accused." Finally, four booksellers, Estoc, Somnaville, Bilaine and Quenel, who had printed the works of Théophile, were to be "taken bodily and led as prisoners from the prison of the Conciergerie of the Palace, to be heard and interrogated upon any facts resulting from the said trial, and where they are not to be apprehended, they are to be given three days' time, by sound of trumpet and public cry, to appear therein, their goods seized and commissioners there established until they shall have obeyed." (See the third volume of the *Histoire de Nostre Temps* by Cl. Malingre, Paris, Jean Petitpas, 1624, pp. 330 and following.)

This memorable decree may be looked upon as the first act of repression and chastisement of the press, from the point of view of manners. It was executed the very day it was handed down. "A phantasm (*fantosme*) was made," Malingre tells us, "clad very nearly like the said Théophile, which was put in a tumbril-cart and led before the church of Nôtre Dame, there to make honorable amends, and then burned *en Grève*." As soon as Théophile, who was hidden in the château of the Baron de Panet, learned of his execution in effigy, he resolved to quit France and made his way in disguise to the frontier; but his description had been sent ahead, with an order of arrest, to all the marshals' provosts. He was recognized on the road to Catelet and the provost of Leblanc seized his person. He was garotted upon a horse and brought back to Saint-Quentin, and from this city, where he remained in secret a number of days, he was transferred in irons to the Conciergerie of Paris. He

was then locked up in the dungeon of Ravillac, where he passed eighteen months before Parliament deigned to take up a review of his case. However powerful his friends may have been, they availed him nothing against the implacable resentment of the Jesuits. Théophile obstinately denied that he was the author or the publisher of the *Parnasse Satyrique*, which had given rise to the whole proceeding; for on the other counts contained in the accusation, the defendant would have had little difficulty in proving his innocence. Parliament was absolutely determined to discover and punish with a terrible severity the impious libertines who had published this frightful collection of erotic and sotadic poetry. The booksellers had had the good fortune to justify themselves, or at least to have their case thrown out of court. Berthelot and Colletet, condemned for contumacy, had not been taken, and Frenicle had been released. Théophile always protested his innocence and the Procurator-General obtained from the Court permission to have read in all the parishes, at the sermon of the high mass, an ecclesiastical admonition, under date of the 24th of October, 1623, in which the official of Paris admonished, under pain of excommunication, "all those, male and female, who knew that, before or since such a time, certain malefactors had made, composed and written, or caused to be written, printed and published, a number of bad sonnets, satires, stanzas, elegies and other pieces of poetry, inserted and contained in a certain book, before and since a certain time printed and published under the name and title of the *Parnasse Satyrique* or other title, containing the said book and other poetical works of the said certain ones, as well as a number of blasphemies against God and His saints, and a number of sacrileges, impieties and other abominations against the honor of God, His church, good manners and public decency; those, male and female, who knew when and at what time and in what place the said book of the *Parnasse Satyrique* and other impious books of that sort had been printed, who had composed them, who had written or furnished the copies to make printings, who had revised them for the press, or who knew that the said certain ones or certain male-

factors, being advised of the criminal prosecution, which had been launched against them, had fled from this city to escape and avoid certain execution of the decree of the Court of the month of August last, and that, nevertheless, these certain ones or some of them had said, recited and published in divers places to divers persons and in divers companies, any of the said sonnets, satires or other poems, or parts of poems as being of their work and fashion, and had said and proffered in divers places the same blasphemies and impieties therein contained, having also solicited, suborned and corrupted a number of spirits of youth to induce them to believe the same impieties and blasphemies, etc.”* But this admonition provoked only vague and ridiculous denunciations, which furnished no new charge against Théophile. The latter defended himself with great force and address, which gave men of letters the courage to defend him also in a multitude of brochures in verse and in prose; his enemies, especially the Jesuits, distinguished themselves on their side in this war of pens, which merely rendered the argument more venomous and the position of the accused more critical. He was still in prison awaiting judgment when love of gain induced certain printers of the provinces to reprint the satirical works which had given rise to these redoubtable proceedings. It was, undoubtedly, at Lyons and at Rouen that presses were found for reproducing surreptitiously the *Espadon Satyrique*, the *Cabinet Satyrique* and the *Parnasse Satyrique*; these counterfeits, badly printed upon horrible paper, were full of gross faults and did not bear, along with the date of 1625, the name of any bookseller; the edition of the *Parnasse* had for title: *Le Parnasse Satyrique du Sieur de Théophile*, as though to furnish one arm the more against the unfortunate poet, who was thus denounced upon the frontispiece of the book attributed to him. Was this an atrocious perfidy on the part of a hidden enemy, or, rather, the shameful result of a bookseller’s speculation?

*The old French text quoted is not as clear as might be.

However this may be, the affair concerning Théophile had been almost forgotten when the trial was reviewed to the advantage of the poet. "It is an affair which, according to custom, made a great noise by its novelty," wrote Malherbe to Racan, in a letter of the 4th of November, 1625; "but since then, it has barely been spoken of. What gives me a still worse opinion is the condition of the persons concerned in it (the Jesuits). For my part, I think I have already written you that I do not hold him guilty of anything, save of having done nothing which redounds to the trade with which he meddles. If he dies, you should have no fear; you will not be taken for one of his accomplices." This cruel persecution finally came to an end. Théophile, in the debates accompanying the rehearing of his case, confounded the witness who had deposed against him and overthrew most of the charges which at first had crushed him with their weight. Parliament revoked the sentence and was content with banishing him from the capital. Thus was inaugurated criminal legislation against bad books, those derogatory to manners and public decency. The poor Théophile died a few months later, as a result of his long and dolorous captivity (the 25th of September, 1626). He had returned to the King's good graces, and he might have returned to Paris to his joyous fine friends; the latter were quite astonished at seeing him make so edifying a death, which did not, however, restrain the Jesuit Raynaud from insisting that the author of the *Parnasse Satyrique* had died in final impenitence (*nullis expiatus sacramentis*) and that he had gone straight to Hell (*abiit in locum suum*). Despite the jurisprudence established by the trial of Théophile Viaud, Parliament passed over many books of the same sort as the *Parnasse Satyrique* before renewing the prosecution against the authors and publishers of these obscene poems; it did not even appear to take cognizance of the reprinting of satiric works which it had prosecuted and condemned, and which now multiplied on all sides. *La Muse Folâtre*, for example, which yielded in nothing to the *Parnasse Satyrique*, was reprinted every year in the most convenient format; *les Muses gaillardes*, *la Quintessence satyrique*, *le Des-*

sert des Muses and other similar collections were published in profusion, and did grave injury to morals by incessantly warming the impure germs of Prostitution; but we do not gain the impression from the judicial annals that the poets and booksellers were compromised on account of their licentious publications, down to the time of the majority of Louis XIV., when, in the interest of good manners, unusually rigorous measures came to be employed against all sorts of corruption. Théophile had not been burned; Berthelot had not been hanged under Louis XIII; but a satirist, Louis Petit, guilty of having composed verses less abominable than those of the *Parnasse Satyrique*, perished upon the pyre in the middle of Louis XIV.'s century.

CHAPTER XLIV

IT IS not a chapter; it is an entire book which ought to be devoted to the history of the theater and its relation to Prostitution. From its origin, the theater has exerted an unfortunate influence over manners and even takes on, in certain periods of social depravity, the character of a true excitation to debauchery. In the first centuries of the Christian Church, the stage had attained the last limits of indecency, and we find, on every page, in the writings of the Fathers a protest on the part of an indignant modesty against the abominable excesses of this school for scandal. We are forced to recognize the fact that the horror inspired by the profane theater in the Christian philosophers was only too well justified by the abuses which had grown up in the theatric art. After Christianity had replaced the cult of the false gods, the theater did not long survive the latter's temples and idols, and for a number of centuries in France no other vestiges of the ancient comedy remained except the masquerades of the Mardi Gras, the feast of the Lame King (*Roi-boît*) and of the Bean (*la Fève*), the saturnalia of the Feast of Fools and that of the Deacons, the "mysteries" and the "shows" (*montres*) of the religious processions and the *entrées* of Kings, Queens, Princes, Princesses, Bishops, Abbots, etc., the dances and the songs of the mountebanks, and the "recitations" of the troubadours and the trouvères. If a few dramatic representations, imitated from Terence and Plautus, took place in convents and in colleges, they escaped ecclesiastic anathema by putting on the cloak of literary pretext and by surrounding themselves with an extreme reserve; but these rare reminiscences of Latin comedy did not constitute theatrical habit in the nation itself, which possibly was unaware that the theater had existed prior to the gross and naïve theatrical sketches attempted by the Brothers of the Passion at the end of the fourteenth century.

The doctrine of the Church against spectacles was invariably upheld by the Fathers and by the Councils; it might be said that it had been justified by the odious orgies which marked the decadence of the pagan theater. The capitularies and the ordinances of the Kings were conformable to the sentiment of the Catholic doctors regarding the theatre and actors. The latter found themselves branded with infamy by the mere fact of their vile trade (*omnes infamiae maculis aspersi, id est histriones ut viles personae, non habeant potestatem accusandi*, Capitulary 789), Respectable folk were commanded to keep a distance between themselves and these infamous ones, and ecclesiastics were never to soil their eyes and ears by listening to their obscene words or by viewing their immodest gestures. (*Histrionum quoque turpium et obscoenorum insolentias jocorum et ipsi animo effugere caeterisque effugienda praedicare debent*. See the *Capitul. des Rois de France*, Volume I., page 1170.) There were, however, always actors who braved the excommunications of the clergy and who accepted the brand of infamy attached to their profession; for there were always, also, voluptuaries and debauchees to pay any price for a forbidden pleasure. The *Histrionat*, or state of comedian, was, therefore, looked upon as a sort of Prostitution, and Saint Thomas does not hesitate to put on the same plane the courtesan who traffics in her body with every comer and the comedian who prostitutes himself in public, so to speak, by selling his grimaces and his licentious postures. The goods acquired in this manner appeared to the learned casuist as ill-acquired and dishonest ones, which should be restored to the poor (*quaedam vero dicuntur male acquisita, quia acquiruntur ex turpi causa, sicut de meretricio et histrionatu*. See the *Traité des jeux de théâtre* by P. Lebrun, Paris, Delaune, 1731, 12mo. page 193). That is why Philip-Augustus, imbued with the idea "that to give to actors was to give to the Devil," expelled the Histrions from his court and forbade them to reappear there, applying to works of devotion and of charity the money which would have been spent on supporting the scandalous debaucheries of the theater.

The theater did not achieve a legal existence in France until it did so by means of the pious disguise under which it was presented to Charles VI. The manners of that period were already quite relaxed, as we have said, and the love of luxury had predisposed minds to a passion for all sensual novelty. The *jeux* of the Brothers of the Passion, were, therefore, received with a sort of furore, when they were produced for the first time at the gates of Paris, in the village of Maur. It was about 1398 that a troupe of wandering comedians, who called themselves the Brothers of the Passion, for the reason that they represented that mystery in the form of scenic dialogues, began giving performances, to which the people came from all directions. These performances, mingled with prayers and canticles, were, undoubtedly, very edifying, if we consider merely their object; but the provost of Paris was afraid they would degenerate into grave disorders, and by an order of the 30th of June, 1398, he forbade all the inhabitants of Paris, as well as those of Saint-Maur and other places subject to his jurisdiction, "to perform any games of characters, either of the life of Jesus Christ, or of the lives of the saints or otherwise, without the permission of the king, under pain of incurring his indignation and of forfeiture to him." These rigorous prohibitions proved that the performances given at Saint-Maur did not take place without some scandal, or, according to an opinion which does not contradict the preceding one, that an ancient law of Philip-Augustus or of Saint Louis had abolished the theater and interdicted the profession of comedian. However this may be, the performances were not renewed until 1602, when Charles VI. desired to assist at them and was so edified by them that he accorded to the Brothers of the Passion letters patent authorizing them to play their *mysteries* "whenever and as many times as they pleased." By virtue of these letters patent, the Brothers established their theater near the Port Saint-Denis, on the ground floor of the Hôpital de la Trinité in which pilgrims and poor travelers found an asylum for the night, when they arrived there after the gates of the city had been closed. The Brothers had

already founded, in the church of this *hôpital*, their Confraternity of the Passion and Ressurrection of our Lord. We believe it is a permissible deduction from the foundation of this confraternity that the first *joueurs*, or actors, who had appeared in the town of Saint-Maur merely had constituted themselves the *maîtres du jeu* and had recruited their confrères among the bourgeois and the tradespeople of the capital. From that moment a taste for the theater spread with frenzy among the population, which came in a throng on Sundays and feast days to the performances of the "mysteries" and "miracles," contributing in abundance to the expenses of the dramatic confraternity.

This curiosity and this enthusiasm were no longer of a devout nature, although the apparent object of the spectacle was to elevate souls by the contemplation of holy things and to dispose them to prayer. It is permissible to suppose that, despite the edifying character of the pieces performed, and notwithstanding the encouragement which the clergy accorded to these pious diversissements, the theater from then on served as an auxiliary to Prostitution. Let us picture to ourselves, for example, what one of these performances must have been like, in a narrow and ill-lighted hall, where the spectators mingled pell-mell, the majority of them standing, a few of them seated, but all crowded together and closely packed in, without distinction of age, sex or condition. The hall was 21 fathoms and a half long by 6 fathoms wide; its height did not exceed, certainly, 15 or 20 feet; it was sustained by arches supporting the upper floor. From the total length it is necessary to subtract at least 15 feet for the stage; for, in addition to the platform on which the drama was played, there were, in the pit of the theater, a number of *établis*, or scaffoldings, containing the images of different places where the action took place and communicating with one another by stairs or ladders. Above, the "Paradise," in a sphere of clouds, stretched its blue pavilion, thickly dotted with stars; below, a dragon's mouth, incessantly moving, symbolized the jaws of Hell, from which came forth devils through jets of smoke and flame; in the center were a number of decoratively painted

planes, planes to which the scene of the drama was transported when the action took place before Herod or Pilate. The audience thus had before its eyes, at one time, the whole local setting of the piece, the action of which evolved, alternately, in Heaven, on earth and in Hell. This was not all; it was necessary, also, to have in full view, throughout the spectacle, all the actors who played the various roles, for the actors, arrayed in their costumes, were arranged on each side of the steps, where they awaited the moment of entrance, watching the rest of the piece like simple spectators; they would descend, each in his turn, into the theater and then remount to their places after having acted their roles. They were never out of sight, at least so long as their role did not demand that they disappear into a small box, closed with curtains, representing a secret chamber, which served to hide from the eyes of the spectator certain delicate actions of the piece, such as the accouchement of Saint Anne, that of Saint Elizabeth, that of the Virgin, etc.* This box or niche trained to the highest degree the imaginative faculties of the public. If the curtains were open, one waited the instant when they should be closed; if they were closed, one kept inquiring when they would be opened. The spectators did not fail to divine all that was hidden from them for decency's sake, and they followed in thought the smuttiest implications of the action; hence the proverbial locution which, referring to some scandalous thing which should not be exposed to glances it might offend, says that it should remain "behind the curtain."

Precise documents are lacking to enable us to determine the indecencies and immoralities which, from the earliest times, had accompanied the rebirth of the theater. But it is certain that these pious performances were the occasion of many dangers to good manners. The "Mystery of the Passion" and the other dramatic compositions of the same sort, which were performed on certain Sundays and feast days in the theater of la Trinité had, undoubtedly, no other object than that of arousing the re-

*Cf. the Horatian precept (*Ars Poetica*): *Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet*, etc.

ligious sentiments of the spectators, and it may be granted that the author of this immense drama, which embraces the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, had accomplished a work of devotion under the form of a work of literature, in which we are forced to recognize great beauty. This work, as a matter of fact, deserved being retouched, and in part remade, by Jean-Michel, Bishop of Mans, who lived in the fifteenth century. But inevitably, in accordance with the genius of the theatre of that age, a great many scenes of the "Mystery of the Passion" and similar mysteries entailed the commonplaces of obscenity, and the dialogue of the subordinate characters borrowed from the popular language a quantity of licentious images and smutty words. Frequently also, the apostles and the saints themselves would appear to have lived in the society of lost women and the most ignoble debauchés. Among a multitude of examples, we shall select one scene from the "Mystery of Saint Genevieve," in which we see a nun of Bourges, who, hearing of the miracles of the saint, had come to pay her a visit. Saint Genevieve asks her what her state is; the nun replies bravely that she is a virgin. "You!" cries the Saint with contempt:

*"Non pas vierge, non, mais ribaude,
Qui futes en avril si baude (débauchée),
Le tiers jours entre chien et loup,
Qu'au jardin Gaultier Chantelou,
Vous souffrites que son berchier
Vous deflorast sous un peschier!"**

But the poetic mysteries ordinarily disdained the primitive descriptions of narrative; they removed from the eyes of the public only certain scenes which would have been a little too lively and

*"You are ribald, not a maid,
And last April, in the shade
Of Gaultier Chantelou's garden-plot,
You let his good lad touch the spot:
Like bitch or wolf, beneath a tree,
You gave him your virginity."

a little too nude to be performed outside the curtained niche. They carried the action to the point where the intelligence of the spectator might complete the episode, the preludes to which had been offensive enough to a timid modesty. Even when the curtains had been drawn, the actor, by gestures and grimaces, felt called upon to interpret what the poet had left under a transparent veil. In the *Vie et histoire de madame sainte Barbe*, which was performed and printed about 1520 (see the Catalogue of the *Bibl. Dram. de M. de Soleinne* by P.-L. Jacob, Bibliophile, Volume I, page 107), although the mystery commences with a sermon on a Text from the Gospel, the first scene opens in a bad house, where a woman *folle de son corps* (*meretrix* is the printed word) sings a song and indulges in obscene gestures (*signa amoris illiciti*, remarks the editor, in the manner of a gloss). The Emperor (he is not otherwise named) orders this woman to persuade the saint to "commit fornication," and following is the manner in which the counsellor to debauchery sets about seducing Madame Barbe, who commends herself to God:

*"Je gaigne chascune journée:
Point je ne me suis sejournee (reposée),
Du jeu d'amour scay bien jouer . . .
A tous gallans fais bonne chere,
Et ainsi vous le devez faire.
Onc ne vy si belles mains,
Belles cuisses et si beaux rains,
Comme vous avez, par mon ame!
Nous deux gagnerons de l'argent,
Car vous avez ung beau corps gent."**

*"I gain each day, as the world knows,
What's due me; I take no repose
From sport of love which I play well. . . .
To every gallant I give good cheer,
And you should do the same, my dear.
For fairer hands were never seen,
Or better buttocks on a queen,
Than you possess, upon my soul!
And we should gain of silver store,
For you have a body men adore."

The authors of the mysteries treated in a highly profane manner the most sacred subjects, but far from reaching the point of the ancient theater, they never accorded a large place to unnatural love; they understood nothing of what we call passionate drama; they frequently expressed with crudity the desires of the flesh; they took pleasure in dealing brutally with lust, and only sometimes do they breathe the breath of a pastoral idyll, full of vague inspiration to the heart, as in this charming dialogue of the two shepherds in the "Mystery of the Passion":

MELCHY.

Les pastourelles chanteront.

ACHIN.

Pastoureaux guetteront oeillades.

MELCHY.

*Les nymphes les écouteront,
Et les driades danseront
Avec les gentes Oreades.*

ACHIN.

*Pan viendra faire ses gambades.
Revenant des Champs-Élysées,
Orpheus fera ses sonnades.
Lors Mercure dira ballades
Et chansons bien autorisées.**

*

MELCHY

Shepherd lasses, they shall sing.

ACHIN

And shepherd lads cast glances shy.

MELCHY

Nymphs shall listen to everything,
And the Dryads dance in ring,
With Oreads nearby.

ACHIN

Pan shall come to skip and play,
From the meadows of the blest,
Orpheus shall frame a lay,
Mercury a ballad gay,
With songs of tuneful zest.

MELCHY.

*Bergêres seront oppressées
Soudainement, sous les pastis . . .*

There were, in such cases, but rare excitations to love, such as might trouble a young heart, tender and naive, without corrupting it or filling it with the poisons of vice. The actors, by the transports of the *jeu*, rather than by a calculated personal perversity, frequently took it upon themselves to add to their rôles a licentious pantomime which the poet had not anticipated but which the public encouraged with bursts of laughter and of applause. Thus, the band of devils, which was called the *diablerie*, was distinguished less by its hideous masks and strange accoutrements than by its indecent postures and disrespectable gestures. These devils, portrayed to us in the old manuscript miniatures, ancient mural paintings and wood engravings, looking less frightful than ridiculous, frequently had the heads of monkeys or satyrs, with lolling tongues in place of the natural parts or in the guise of breasts. Satan or Lucifer presented a body wholly composed of these grotesque heads, heads with rolling provocative eyes and which appeared to make use of their tongues as emblems of impurity. Moreover, the tails of certain demons affected obscene forms and proportions. These libidinous eccentricities were, undoubtedly, tolerated on the part of the devils, for the reason that, according to the beliefs of the Catholic Church, the spirit of evil is, above all, the agent of impudicity. Each performance took place under the surveillance of a sergeant, whose express business it was to watch over the acting and the policing of the hall, and to see that nothing took place there that was not decent and orderly. (See the Request addressed to the lieutenant of the provost of Paris by the masters of the confraternity in 1403, in the *Variétés histor., phys, et littér.*, published by Boucher d'Argis, in 1752, Volume I, page 461.)

MELCHY

Shepherds shall be soon oppressed
Beneath the

This surveillance was, undoubtedly, called for among both actors and spectators. The former, for example, followed no rule of art, but surrendered to all the fantasies of their imagination; each one dressed according to his fancy, endeavoring to think up whatever would cause him to stand out from his confrères and aid him to win the favor of the audience. From this desire to shine, this artistic emulation, resulted incredible blackguardisms and the most bizarre creations. The "devils," as we have said, indulged in serious outrages to modesty, which were charged to the account of the demon. But the angelic choir was not any more reserved, and the angels frequently displayed a singular forgetfulness of their silent rôle. Angels and devils were portrayed by supernumeraries, who sang canticles, recited prayers and produced cries and groans at a given signal; their evolutions, their dances, their grimaces and their buffooneries, depended only on the "inspiration" (*ingenium*) of each player. Sometimes a cherubim, upon regaining his stall, would draw up his long white robe and reveal the fact that he had removed his breeches (*grègues*) so that he might not be recognized as the master bonnet-maker or journeyman *baudroyeur* of the rue Saint-Denis; sometimes, another one of the blessed, clad in a priest's chasuble, in falling through a trap, would remain suspended, heels over head, until someone would come to deliver him and restore a bit of order to his toilet. These burlesque episodes are indicated in the script of some of these *jeux*. Moreover, there was no woman among the *joueurs*; the feminine rôles were entrusted to young lads who were the best fitted for them by physique, and who could best counterfeit feminine wiles. There was here a particular attraction for vile debauchées, who were not lacking in interest in these handsome *garconnets*, and who, in addition to admiring them in the theater, probably sought to meet them off stage. We may, therefore, suppose that, despite the surveillance of the sergeant, the policing of manners was not, and could not have been, effective in the interior of the hall, in the parquet, where no one was seated, and where the spectators formed a compact and impenetrable mass, or in the passageways and on the

staircases, which were not always deserted and silent during the performance, and which were not lighted until the end of the sixteenth century. A rule of the civil lieutenant concerning the theater of the hôtel de Bourgogne, under date of the 12th of November, 1609 (see the *Traité de la Police* by Delamare, Volume I, page 472), orders that "the said theater shall be required to have a light by lantern or otherwise, not only in the parquet and galleries, but also above the doors at the exit, the whole under pain of a fine of 100 crowns and exemplary punishment. We call upon the commissioner of police to give his attention to this and to make a report to us of any infractions." Despite this rule, and others of a similar nature which may have preceded it, we know, from a book printed in the time of Louis XIV., that the lighting of the staircases and corridors was so neglected at this period that these obscure places served as rendezvous for gallant encounters during the performance. For the author whom we cite, without being able to recall the title of his work, complains of the fact that, upon arriving late at a comedy, once a performance had begun, a decent woman ran the risk of falling over, in the darkness, an amorous couple who barred the passage. As to the interior of the hall, it was lighted only by two or three smoky lanterns, suspended by cords above the parquet, and by a row of great tallow candles lighted in front of the stage, which became obscure when the candle-snuffer was not actively engaged in his employment. We shall not expatiate at any greater length upon the acts of debauchery which were committed, especially in the parquet, during the performances; suffice it to say that this daily scandal, which furnished no little ammunition to the enemies of the theater continued until Voltaire had succeeded in causing the spectators in the parquet to be seated. The Abbot of Latour, in his *Réflexions morales, politiques, historiques et littéraires sur le théâtre*, still complains, in 1772 (see Book IX, Volume V, page 6, of this collection), of the debauchery in the parquet; Nevertheless, the theater might have escaped the excommunication of the church, the remonstrances of parliament and the vindictiveness of police magistrates, if it had

preserved the exclusively religious character which had secured its reestablishment under Charles VI; but by the time dramatic confraternities, similar to those of the Passion, had been established in the provinces, and had undertaken also the performance of "mysteries" and of "miracles," with the aid of the masters and journeymen of the corporations, the younger folks had grown tired of an edifying spectacle which resembled a dramatized sermon; the old Gallic gaiety was no longer content with these pious representations, though there was in them much material for laughter, and so it was, comedy came to be born in France. Joyous confraternities, which called themselves *les Enfants-sans-souci* and *les Clercs de la Bazoche*, were founded in Paris and played farces, or *sotties* (which did not demand the theatrical pomp of the "mysteries," and which called for only a small number of good comedians). This new facetious theater was conducted at first in the open air, upon the fields of the fair and in the halls and at the street corners of the city. Two or three mountebanks, mounted upon trestles, laden with tinsel fripperies and with their faces blackened or smeared with flour, would engage in a sprightly but smutty diologue, portraying scenes of popular manners, the subject of which was almost invariably love and marriage. These portrayals, indecent enough in themselves were marvelously adapted to still more indecent improvisations. Later, these improvisations were succeeded by pieces written in verse, or rather in rhymed lines, which did not prevent the actor from improvising still, and which still left a margin for his licentious pantomime. It required nothing more than this to take away from the Brothers of the Passion the majority of their spectators and to render their performances less productive. It was in vain that the latter endeavored to enter into competition with their redoubtable rivals, by interpolating in the mysteries certain burlesque episodes, certain clownish characters, which lent a little diversion to the gravity and majesty of the subject; it availed nothing; the players of the farces were always better received than the brothers of the hôpital de la Trinité, and the amusement-seeking public took sides with them when they were persecuted by

the provost of Paris, who attempted to oppose the permanent installation of their theater. It was already too late to suppress a species of spectacle which so well suited the French mind; nothing could be done except to prescribe limits for it and to subordinate it, so to speak, to the privilege granted by Charles VI. to the brothers of the Passion. As a consequence the brothers signed with the Enfants-sans-souci a treaty of alliance, by the terms of which they were to exploit, together and upon the same stage, the two dramatic genres, which shared the still restricted domain of theatric art. It was agreed between the two rival troupes that each should set off the other, and that they should play, in turn, farces and mysteries in order to vary their performances. The people, who seem to have been called upon to witness the signing of the contract, displayed a fine appreciation of its importance so far as their pleasures were concerned and designated under the name of *jeu des pois pilés* this association of the most disparate genres, of the sacred and the profane, of the tragic and the comic, the edifying and the scandalous. This expression of *pois pilés* ("pounded peas") which signifies a mixture or pot-pourri, contains an evident allusion to some farce, once very well known, in which a wag (*badin*) was represented as pounding dried peas and mixing them with lupine peas, which are bitter, and chick-peas, which are valuable as medicine.

The theater of Paris, which was, if one may make use of the expression, the head of all the theaters in France, continued to be constituted in this manner down to the middle of the sixteenth century; it had two distinct troupes, that of the Brothers of the Passion and that of the Enfants-sans-souci, who played simultaneously or alternately. The performances took place between the mass and vespers on a Sunday, that is to say, from noon to about four o'clock; and since it would have been impossible in this interval of time to portray a mystery which had sometimes thirty acts, 40,000 verses and two or three hundred actors, the players limited themselves to extracting a few scenes, or it may be, an entire act, which, accompanied by a farce or an harangue, composed the spectacle. In rare circumstances, especially in

the provinces, a complete mystery would be given, and then the representation would last for a number of days.* It then took place no longer in a closed hall, but in the ruins of a Roman amphitheatre, as at Doué, in an open theater reared in the public place or on a vast plain. Upon these solemn occasions, all the inhabitants of the city, of a country (*pays*) or of a *généralité* would share the common expense, furnishing alms, food, arms and habits, with the right of assisting at the *jeu* and the *montre* which always constituted the prelude. It will be sufficient to observe how Prostitution was favored by these "plenary courts" (*cours plénières*) of the people, which inspired so many diverse passions, so many vanities, so many desires and so many seductions. The playing of a great mystery would, inevitably, occasion numberless orgies and disorders of all sorts. But in Paris, at least, the weekly performance of the Brothers of the Passion and the Enfants-sans-souci, although equally dangerous to manners, could not give rise to such excesses; they, rather, acted slowly upon the public morality and altered insensibly the purity of souls by constantly stirring up the dregs of social life. And yet, the theater, however obscene, however scandalous, however corrupt it may have been, does not appear to have incurred at Paris the animadversion or the reprimands of the civil or ecclesiastical authorities before the reign of Louis XI. We have said elsewhere that, about 1512, the Enfants-sans-souci were threatened with expulsion and were obliged to suspend their representations until their confrère, Clément Marot, had put them back in the king's favor. We do not know what led to this disgrace, but it is probable that it was not a question of manners, but rather that the audacious farceurs had permitted themselves, in the manner of the clerics de la Bazoche, a few satirical quips relative to the king, his political policy or Queen Anne of Brittany. It was, undoubtedly, on this occasion that Louis XII. remarked his purpose of seeing to it that the honor of ladies was respected, indicating that he would give good cause for repentance to any who

*Cf. the coventry plays.

offended that honor. It is altogether likely that the grievances which were alleged at this time for the closing of the theater of the Enfants-sans-souci were the origin of a custom which continued throughout the sixteenth century and which has come down to our day: the *maîtres du jeu* came to be required to depose with the office of the provost of Paris the manuscript of the pieces which they desired to play, and to obtain from the provost or from his lieutenant preliminary permission for the performance of the piece.* Frequently, it is true, authors and actors refused to bow to this servitude, and many smutty farces, which were looked upon as impromptu, thus escaped the examination of the cenosrs who had not authorized them; the civil lieutenant, in his regulations of the 12th. of November, 1609, renewed his prohibition against performing "any comedies or farces, which they (the comedians) have not communicated to the procurator of the king, the record of which has not been signed by us." We cannot believe that the prologues of Bruscombille, the harrangues of Tabarin or the songs of Gauthier-Garguille had been subjected in this manner to the king's procurator and given his approbation.

We have already spoken of the debauched lives of the comedians and of all the young libertines who embraced this none too honorable profession in order to be able to indulge the more easily in debauchery, misdemeanors and vagabondage. We have seen that the poets, following the example of Villon and of Clément Marot, had, above all, an irresistible penchant for the theater. It may be surmised that devotion and religious enthusiasm were no longer, as in the early days, the bond and attraction of the Brothers of the Passion. The Church, nevertheless, had not yet branded them with its anathema, whatever may have been the depravity of their manners and the scandal of their private conduct. The theologians, in their dogmatic writings, stated clearly that churchmen could not, without breaking the canonical laws, give the sacrament of the Eucharist to actors, who were always in a state of mortal sin (see the *Traité hist. et dogmat. des jeux*

*Cf. modern British licensing.

de théâtre of Père Lebrun, page 202), and the famous casuist, Gabriel Biel, who examined into this case of conscience at the end of the fifteenth century, at the very moment when the Confraternity of the Passion was being established, includes the theatrical art among those which are accursed and forbidden. The statutes of the University of Paris, ordained that comedians should be relegated beyond the *ponts* and that they should never come to dwell within the quarter of the schools, so dangerous to morality were their performances seen to be (*Ludi . . . quibus lascivia, petulantia, procacitas excitetur*, statutes 29 and 35). Nevertheless, the doctrine of the Church against comedians was never enforced in any general and rigorous manner, the comedians being commonly interred in holy ground; witness the sepulchres and epitaphs of a few of them, to be viewed in different parishes of Paris. As to the comediennes, they were no more subject to excommunication than their male companions when they began to appear upon the stage and to show themselves without masks, during the reign of Henri III. or that of Henri IV. These female players were, however, no more than the concubines of the comedians, and they led, like the latter, so dissolute a life that, to make use of the expression of Tallemant des Réaux, they served as "common wives" (*femmes communes*) to the whole dramatic troupe. They had always been a part of the association of nomadic or stationary actors; but the public had not made their acquaintance, and their more or less indecent attributes had remained hidden behind the veil of the theater; as soon as they had come to take up the rôles of women, which had always been played by men, their presence upon the stage was looked upon as an odious prostitution of their sex.

These first comediennes were looked upon with so much disfavor by the public, which barely tolerated them in their new rôles, that these parts were not looked upon as their natural right, while comedians frequently disputed them. It is our opinion that it was the example of the Italian and Spanish troupes which led to the appearance of women upon the French stage. The Italian troupe was called from Venice to Paris by Henri III. The Span-

ish troupe did not arrive there until the time of Henri IV. These two troupes created much disorder, and the same might be said of the actresses, who added, through the immodesty of their acting and their toilet, one more scandalous attraction to the performances. "On Sunday, the 9th of May, 1577," says P. de l'Estoile, "the Italian comedians, nicknamed *i Gelosi*, began to play their Italian comedies in the hall of the hostelry of Bourbon at Paris; they took as salary 4 sols a head from all the French who desired to go see them play, and there was there such a concourse and affluence of people that the four best preachers of Paris could not have gathered so many together when they were preaching." We have reported above the special charm which these performances had for the libertines, who went there especially to admire "*ces bonnes dames*," whose breasts, entirely uncovered, rose and fell "by compass or measure like a clock." Parliament felt that it was time to put an end to these immodest exhibitions, and six weeks after the opening of the theatre of the *Gelosi* it forbade them to play the comedies under pain of a fine of 10,000 Parisian pounds, applicable to the poor box (*boîte des pauvres*); but these Italians did not regard themselves as beaten, and on Saturday, the 27th of July, they reopened the theatre in the hôtel de Bourbon, "as before," l'Estoile tells us, "by the permission and express justice of the king, the corruption of these times being such that the farceurs, buffoons, whores and mignons have all the credit." As to the Spanish actors, they were established, in 1604, at the fair of Saint-Germain, and their sojourn at Paris was marked by the punishment of two of them, whom the bailiff of Saint-Germain caused to be broken upon the wheel alive as being guilty of the murder of a comedienne, their comrade, whom they had slain with a dagger and hurled into the Seine. This beautiful Spanish girl, aged twenty-two years, or thereabouts, as l'Estoile tells us, "had had for a long time private and familiar relations" with these two men, who slew her undoubtedly out of revenge, rather than for purposes of theft. Such is, in our opinion, the origin of comediennes upon the French stage. It would be impossible to say who was the first one thus to expose herself to

the glances of spectators. We find the name of the *femme Dufresne*, written in hand upon a copy of the *Union d'amour et de chasteté*, a pastoral in five acts and in verse, of the invention of A. Gautier, a provincial apothecary. This piece, printed at Poitiers in 1606, was certainly played about this time. (See the *Biblioth. dramat. of M. de Soleinne*, Volume I., page 189.) In a copy of another theatrical piece of the same period, the *Tragédie de Jeanne d'Arques, dite la Pucelle d'Orléans*, printed at Rouen by Raphael du Pettit-Val in 1603, we find the names of two actresses, written in hand: the editor of the Catalogue of the dramatic Library of M. de Soneinne (*Supplem. au tome I.*, page 30) has read these names as *V. Froneuphe* and *Marthon Plus*. We are led to believe that the proper reading is *Fanuche*, which was the name of a famous courtesan with whom Henri IV. had an affair. (See above, Chapter XXXIII.) Finally, the Abbot of Marolles, in his *Mémoires* (Volume I., page 59 of the 12mo. edition, published in 1755), cites with praise an actor of the hôtel de Bourgogne, who played women's rôles in 1616, under the name of *Perinne*, along with Gautier Garguille; he speaks also of "that famous comedienne called Laporte (*Marie Dernier*), who was still upon the stage and who was the admiration of all, along with Valleran."

It may be affirmed that women had never figured in the "mysteries;" and so, the prohibition of this variety of spectacle is not to be attributed to any scandal which their presence might have caused. It was in 1540 that Parliament judged it necessary to intervene for the first time in matters of the theater, but it is certain that its intervention had been needed for a long time in the interest of manners. Parliament began by restoring the hôpital de la Trinité to its ancient use and by dislodging from it the Brothers of the Passion, who transferred the seat of their confraternity to the headquarters of the Jacobins in the rue Saint-Jacques and their theater to the hôtel de Flandres. The theater was installed at great expense in this large hôtel, situated between the rues Platrière, Coq-Heron, Coquillière and des Vieux-Augustins; but after the first performance of a new "mystery," that of

the "Old Testament," played at the end of the year 1541, parliament ordered the closing of the theater for reasons set forth in the decree: "1. Since, to rejoice the people there are commonly mingled with sports of this sort, farces or derisory comedies which are things forbidden by the holy canons; 2. Since the authors of these pieces play for gain and are, therefore, to be looked upon as actors, *joculateurs* or mountebanks; 3. Since the assemblages at these sports give rise to parties or assignations of adultery and fornication; 4. Since all this calls for an expenditure of money which is improper to the bourgeois and to the artisans of the city." (*Disc. sur la comédie ou Traité histor. et dogm. des jeux du théâtre* by P. Pierre Lebrun, Paris, veuve Delaulee, 1731, page 214.) The Brothers of the Passion desired to regain their privileges, granted by Charles VI. and confirmed upon a number of occasions by the kings who were his successors; they, therefore, addressed a request to parliament and a supplication to the king, setting forth that, from time immemorial, they had played their mysteries "to the popular edification, without general or particular offense." The king gave orders, and parliament confirmed his decision by a decree under date of the 27th of January, 1541 (1542, new style). The Court, following the letters patent of the king, which permitted Charles Leroyer and his consorts, masters and entrepreneurs of the play and mystery of the Old Testament, to represent this mystery, granted the Brothers of the Passion the same permission, "with the charge that they were to use it well, without using any frauds, nor interpolating profane, lascivious nor ridiculous things." It is further stated in this decree "that for entrance to the theatres, they (the *maîtres du jeu*) shall not take more than 2 sous from each person, and for the rent of each *loge* during the said mystery, but 30 crowns; nor shall they perform except on feast days which are not solemn; they shall commence at one hour of the afternoon and end at five and shall see to it that no scandal or tumult ensues, and since thereby the people will be distracted from divine service and their alms will be diminished, they shall give to the poor the sum of 1,000 crowns, unless a greater sum be or-

dained." We have here, it has been said, the first application of the *droit des pauvres* (right of the poor), which was applied at first to the profit of the poor orphans.

Parliament had already become aware of the inconvenience of the mysteries and the obscenity of the accompanying farces; the "Mystery of the Passion," retouched and corrected by Arnoul Greben, still contained more than one intolerable passage (see the *Hist. de Paris*, of Dulare, 12mo. edition, Volume III, page 501); the "Mystery of the Old Testament" (*Mystère de l'ancien Testament*) the first to be performed and printed, contained scenes which outraged manners no less than religion. The king suddenly ordered the demolition of the hôtel de Flandres, and the Brothers of the Passion found themselves once more without an asylum; an attempt was probably being made to force them to close their theater. They purchased the old hôtel de Bourgoyne in the rue Mauconseil, and they there constructed a new theater; but when they undertook to resume their performances, parliament, petitioned for a confirmation of their privileges, expressly forbade them, by decree of the 17th. of November, 1548, "to play the mysteries of the Passion of Our Lord or other sacred mysteries, under pain of an arbitrary fine, permitting them, however, to play other mysteries, profane, honest and elicited, without offending and injuring any person." The mysteries had had their day; a few of them were reprinted, but they were no longer played except in the provinces. Parliament, which had forbidden them, was merely conforming to the taste of the public, whom this species of spectacle left cold or indignant. Tragedy and comedy shared the succession to the mysteries, but the favorite genre of the sixteenth century, one which honest folk reprobated, but which parliament did not dare to forbid, was the farce of the *Enfants-sans-souci*, that licentious and clownish comedy which dramatized the vices and humor of the people.* "The farces," says Louis Guyon, in the *Diverses leçons* (Lyons Ant. Chard, 1625, 3 volumes, octavo), "differed in nothing from the

*And which reached its highest expression in Molière.

comedies, save that they introduced interlocutors who represented small folk, and who by their gestures taught the people to laugh, and among others, there were introduced one or two who counterfeited the fools called Zanis* and Pantaloons, having false faces very counterfeit and ridiculous: in France, they were called *badins* and clad in the same habits. Commonly the matter had to do only with the good tricks which these knaves performed, for their suppers, on poor idiots and the ill-advised who lightly let themselves be deceived and persuaded; or there were introduced luxurious and voluptuous persons who deceived a few married dunces and idiots to abuse their wives, or very often, wives who invented the means of enjoying the fires of love finely, without anyone's perceiving. . . . As to the farces, often as not they were full of all impudicities, villanies and gluttonies, and gestures little honest, teaching people how one might deceive the wife of another, and servants and servant maids their masters, and other similar things, which are reprov'd by wise folk and which are not found good." Nevertheless, the farces, the great majority of which remained unpublished and have followed the old comedians to the tomb, continued to occupy the theater down to the reign of Louis XIV., when some of the most celebrated among them were transformed into comedies.

Since the suppression of the spectacle of the mysteries, the theater, in place of being purified and tending toward a moral end, abandoned itself to a license well calculated to justify the bitter complaints of its enemies; it appeared to have no other object than that of corrupting youth and teaching debauchery. Following are the terms in which a zealous Catholic denounced it, in 1588, to the horror of good citizens and the chastisement of magistrates, in his *Remonstrances très-humbles au roy de France, et de Pologne Henry troisieme de ce nom, sur les désordres et misères du royaume*. "In this sewer and house of Satan," named the *Hostel de Bourgogne*, the actors of which call themselves abusively 'Brothers of the Passion of Jesus

*Our Zany.

Christ,' there are a thousand scandalous assignations, to the prejudice of the decency and modesty of women and to the ruin of the families of poor artisans, with which the lower hall (the parquet) is filled, and who, more than two hours before the play, pass their time in immodest devices, games of cards and of dice, in gluttony and drunkenness, quite publicly, from which come many quarrels and blows. . . . Upon the scaffold (the stage), there are erected altars laden with crosses and ecclesiastical ornaments; there are represented there priests clad in surplices, even in immodest farces, for the purpose of performing a laughable marriage . . . and, moreover, there is not a farce which is not foul, dirty and villainous, to the scandal of the youth which assists at them."

The farces of the sixteenth century were the shame of our French theater and sadly served the social demoralization; but we would know of them only by hearsay, if two recent publications had not given us nearly a hundred and fifty of them, which have thus escaped a systematic destruction. "One could not say," wrote Antoine du Verdier, Sieur de Vauprivas, in his *Bibliothèque françoise*, printed at Lyons in 1584, "it would be hard to say how many farces were composed and printed, so great is their number; for in the past, everybody took a hand at making them, and even the actors called Enfants-sans-souci played and recited them. Now a farce is but an act of comedy, and the shortest is looked upon as the best, in order to avoid the ennui which prolixity and length bring to the spectators." Du Verdier adds that, according to the *Art de Rhetorique* of Gratian du Pont, the farce, or *sottise*, must not exceed five hundred verses. In addition to the farce, properly so-called, there were, also, joyous dialogues with two characters, monologues and joyous sermons, which a single comedian recited. Despite the multitude of farces which have existed, a score, at most, have been saved; for the ecclesiastics and devout persons saw to it that all the copies of these free or obscene compositions were destroyed; one cannot explain, otherwise, why so many printed farces, so many successive editions, have disappeared without leaving

any traces. There was discovered a few years ago, in an ancient library in Germany, a collection of sixty-four farces, dialogues, monologues and "joyous sermons" printed, the majority of them, at Lyons, about 1545; the *British Museum* of London has recently acquired this unique collection, in which are to be found only six or seven pieces already known in various editions. It is this collection of farces which M. Violet-Leduc publishes today under the title of *Ancien Théâtre Français* (Paris, P. Jannet, 1854, three volumes, in-18). Previously, M. Francisque-Michel had published (Paris, Techener, 1831-37, four volumes, octavo), after a manuscript in the possession of the Duke of la Vallière (see the *Catalogue* of his books, No. 3304), which is now in the Imperial Library, seventy-four farces of the same period, which are certainly printed for the first time, the ancient editions having been wiped out like so many others. These two collections, so precious for the historian of the old theater, show us what need public modesty had to groan at the farces, where the acting always exaggerated the indecency of subject and dialogue.

The implacable warfare waged on printed farces had already succeeded in rendering them sufficiently rare toward the beginning of the seventeenth century, to make it necessary for a bibliophile, who was a connoisseur in this species of waggish literature, to save a few of them from destruction by printing, in the year 1612, through Nicolas Rousset, bookseller of Paris, a *Recueil de plusieurs farces tant anciennes que modernes, lesquelles ont esté mises en meilleur ordre et langage qu'auparavant*. The authors of the *Bibliothèque du Théâtre François* (the Duke of la Bellière, Marin and Mercier de Saint-Léger) have analyzed the seven farces contained in this curious collection, in a manner to prove to use that the theater of that time showed no respect to the audience, which pardoned the greatest filth, provided it had an excuse to laugh. One of these farces, which La Fontaine has imitated in his tale of the *Faiseur d'oreilles*, introduces a pregnant woman, who demands of a physician whether she is to have a boy or a girl. The physician looks into

her hand and tells her that the child will have no nose. The woman is in despair, but the physician consoles her and promises to repair the evil; with this object in view, he retires with her. The wife rejoins her husband, who is waiting at the door, and is brought to bed a moment after. "How is this," demands the husband, "it has been thirteen months since I have approached you, and you are giving birth to a child, whereas in the first year of our marriage you were brought to bed at the end of six months! . . . "It is because," she replies, "the first time the child was placed too near the outlet and the second time too far up." It was nothing to represent the accouchement of a woman upon the stage; frequently lovers were to be seen going to bed and playing their roles between the covers! Frequently also, the action took place behind the scenes or in the niche closed with curtains; but in order to avoid any misunderstanding, the spectator was advised of all that he was not permitted to see. In the *Farce joyeuse et recreative d'une femme qui demande les arrérages à son mari*, the wedded pair, who have had a lawsuit over this chapter in their matrimonial history, end by agreeing and coming out together. A neighbor, who has been employed to reconcile the two parties, then says:

*"Ils s'en sont allés là derriere,
Pensez, cheviller leur accord,
Afin qu'il en tienne plus fort.
C'est ainsi qu'il faut apaiser
Les femmes, quand veulent noiser."**

In the *Farce nouvelle, contenant le debat d'un jeune moine et d'un vieil gendarme, par-devant le dieu Cupidon, pour une fille* (New Farce, Containing the Debate of a Young Monk and an old Gendarme, in the Presence of the God Cupid, over a

*They, my friends, have gone behind,
As you may guess, to peg their mind,
So that it will better hold.
For that's the only way to deal
With women when they that way feel.

Girl), this girl comes to lay her case before the throne of Cupid. She feels agitated by desires and amorous needs; Cupid counsels her to take a lover rather than a husband, and promises to provide her with the best there is. A young monk and an old gendarme dispute the possession of the girl, and Cupid, to put them all in good humor, invites them to join in singing a song; they excuse themselves, one after another, from the honor of this musical challenge, but the motives for their refusal are merely gross equivocations. The two contestants decline to try the timbre of their voices, whereupon Cupid proposes to test the capacity of each one; but the god of love has recourse to indications less deceptive, and he gives the girl to understand that a young monk is worth more than an *old* gendarme.

It would be necessary to cite all the farces which have come down to us from the sixteenth century, in order to convey a complete idea of their immorality and the part they played in the teaching of Prostitution. A good woman, after having assisted at these immodest performances, would carry away with her a soul defiled and a mind turned to lust. Not only did the most obscene images, the crudest words, the most shameful maxims garnish the dialogue of the farceurs, but their pantomime and their actions on the stage were, likewise, horrible provocations to debauchery. It would be impossible to form any idea of the popular farces of the time without reading a few of them. The *Bibliothèque du Théâtre François* by the Duke of la Vallière, Marin and Mercier de Saint-Léger, the *Histoire de Théâtre François* by the brothers Parfaict, and the *Histoire Universelle des Théâtres* published by a society of men of letters, give a detailed analysis of a number of these licentious pieces; but the reader who desires to study more exactly the origins of our dramatic literature should have recourse to the precious collection of farces which M. P. Jannet has just reprinted in his *Bibliothèque Elzevirienne*, under the title of *Ancien Théâtre François*. We shall remark, especially, among the seventy-four farces, histories, moralities, debates, monologues, dialogues and "joyous sermons" which compose this collection, the *farce de frère Guil-*

lebert which the ancient editor describes as "very good and very joyous;" it is, as a matter of fact, truly comic, and we may well conceive the success and foolish laughter which it met with upon its performance; it is the freest of those which have come down to us. It commences with one of those joyous sermons which frequently formed the interlude or entr'acte to a tragedy or a serious comedy.

Such was the popular theater down to the beginning of the sixteenth century; we have desired to show, by the analysis of the celebrated farces of the period, the sorry influence which they must have exercised upon manners. Farces of this sort were innumerable, as Du Verdier tells us; they were played throughout France, in the smallest villages; they served as a theme, so to speak, for the most indecent pantomime: they defiled, at once, the eyes and ears of the spectators, who, by their applause and their outbursts of senseless laughter, encouraged the immodest conduct of the actors. We can understand why the Catholic clergy had condemned with indignation this deplorable abuse of the theatric art, and we are no longer astonished, in the presence of such ordures, that the entire theater should find itself enveloped in that anathema with which the Church had branded farceurs and comedians. Saint Francis of Sales, who composed about this period his writings on morality, compared the theatric representations, to mushrooms, the best of which are not healthy. And yet, the civil authorities, whose business it was to watch over the policing of manners, do not appear to have been moved by the incredible license of the French theater, before the end of the reign of Louis XIII; up to that time, the Civil Lieutenant, in a few decrees relative to comedians, had enjoined the latter not to perform any but "licit and honest pieces, which offend no one;" but the commissioners and sergeants do not appear to have executed these decrees to the profit of public decency. On the other hand, repression was very prompt and very severe regarding personal satires addressed to persons of quality and notable individuals. Comedians who permitted themselves the least lack of respect

towards persons or personal secrets were imprisoned, at that time, without process of law. As to farces which were merely smutty or ignoble, they were given free rein, and no one appears to have been scandalized by them, especially since these indecent spectacles so charmed the people, who found in them a painting of their own gross manners, the faithful expression of their own low sentiments, and a copy of their own trivial language.

We have already said that the majority of the farces were not printed, and that those which were printed have disappeared for the major part. There are still enough in the collection of the *British Museum* at London and the Imperial Library at Paris to give us an exact idea of the excessive depravation which alone could account for the tolerance shown these disguising pieces. Following are the titles of a few of them, which will be found to contain all that their preambles promise: "New farce, very good and very joyous of women who demand arrears of their husbands and oblige them by a *nisi*; for four persons, namely, the husband, the lady, the chambermaid and the neighbor. — A new farce and very joyous, of women who have their cauldrons mended, but forbid putting a piece over the hole, for three persons, namely, the first wife, the second and the *maïg-nen*. — Farce very good and very joyous of Jeninot, who made a king of his cat, from fault of other companion, by crying: "The king is lame! and who mounted upon his mistress to lead her to mass; for three persons, etc." Such were the titles which gave a foretaste of the pieces thus advertised to the public, pieces which had an extraordinary vogue. These farces were learned by heart, and each person was capable at need of taking a rôle in them, when professional *joueurs* were lacking; a confraternity of apprentices, a trade corporation, or a social organization constituted a dramatic troupe. The associations of bourgeois or artisan actors multiplied in all parts of the realm in the first half of the sixteenth century, and Prostitution, which was always the motive behind this unbridled passion for the theater, was

propagated in proportion to the number of comedians and comediennes, who lived in the most filthy disorder.

"There were two troupes then at Paris," relates Tallemant des Réaux, who had received the tradition from the mouths of his contemporaries (Volume X of the 12mo. edition, page 40); "they were almost all sharpers, and their wives lived in the greatest license in the world; the latter were wives in common, even to comedians of another troupe than the one to which they belonged." Tallemant des Réaux adds, further on: "Comedy was not in honor until after the Cardinal of Richelieu had taken it up (about 1625); before that honest women did not go to it." The three cleverest farceurs of the time, known, under their theatrical names, as Turlupin, Gaultier Garguille and Gros-Guillaume, played without women and carried their burlesque to the point of the most shameless cynicism; Tallemant des Réaux says, however, that Gaultier Garguille was "the first to commence to live a little more orderly than the others," and that Turlupin, "improving upon the modesty of Gaultier Garguille, furnished a room properly; for all the others were scattered here and there and had neither hearth nor home." Sauval, who wrote his *Histoire des Antiquités de Paris* at the same time that Tallemant was writing his *Historiettes*, is careful not to give a certificate of good manners to these three famous buffoons; he even says of Gaultier Garguille that "he never loved except in low places;" and the epitaph composed for the three friends, interred together in the church of Saint-Sauver, contains what well may have been an allusion to the immorality of their association:

*Gaultier, Guillaume et Turlupin,
Ignorans en grec et latin,
Brillèrent tous trois sur la scène
Sans recourir au sexe féminin,
Qu'ils disoient un peu trop malin.**

*Gaultier, Guillaume, Turlupin cant,
Of Greek and Latin ignorant,
Most brilliantly upon the stage;
No women them their aid do grant;

*Faisant oublier toute peine,
 Leur jeu de théâtre badin
 Dissipoit le plus fort chagrin.
 Mais la Mort, en une semaine,
 Pour venger son sexe mutin,
 Fit à tous trois trouver leur fin.*

Gros-Guillaume ("Big William") played with his face uncovered; but his two friends were always masked; each of them had a characteristic costume, which he never changed in the farce. Before being incorporated in the troupe of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, they had set up their trestles in a tennis court, which was not sufficient to contain all the curious ones attracted to these performances. The Cardinal of Richelieu desired to see and hear; he was fascinated with them and judged them worthy of becoming comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, whither they transferred their farces and their songs. It may be supposed that these farces were the compositions of Turlupin* and Gros-Guillaume, since the name of *Turlupinades* has remained attached to these facetious pieces, which they played with abundant gesture and in impromptu fashion, in the manner of the Italian farces. We know, however, that the songs which our three friends sang so pleasantly, had no other author than Gaultier Garguille, who himself had them printed in 1632 (Paris, Targa, little 12mo.), and who obtained for this purpose, under his right name, a privilege from the King, granted, it was stated, "to our dear and well-beloved Hugues Gueru, called Fléchelles, one of our ordinary comedians, from fear that counterfeiterers may add a few other songs more dissolute." The *Chanson de Gaultier*

The sex with evil is rampant;
 But they, in their theatric rage,
 Most cleverly, indeed, enchant;
 Dull care with them is not extant.
 Till Death, in one week, ends the page;
 Avenging their sex dissonant,
 She draws a curtain adamant.

*Turlupin is the Robelaisan *Tirelupin*, which the Urquhart and Motteux version paraphrases as "new start-up grub."

Garguille, however dissolute it may have been in essence, had passed into a proverb and many folk, Sauval tells us, only went to the Hôtel de Bourgogne in order to hear it. As to the farces in which Turlupin (Henri Legrand was his family name) distinguished himself "by encounters full of wit, of fire and of judgment," they were known only by scenes reproduced in the old prints of Mariette and of Abraham Bosse. Moreover, these illustrious farceurs had tried their luck also, and with success, in heroic comedy, which sometimes descended to the trivialities of farce.

The Hôtel de Bourgogne, where the farces, properly so-called, were represented down to the middle of the seventeenth century, possessed, at the commencement of that century, a comedian-author not less famous than Turlupin, Gaultier Garguille, Gros-Guillaume and Guillot-Gorju were later to become. He was a native of Champagne, named Deslauriers, who had taken the soubriquet of *Bruscambille*, under which he composed and published the "*Plaisantes Imaginations*," which he performed upon the stage, in order to hold the attention of the audience between two pieces and to prepare them to give a good reception to the farce which was to come. The employment of these comic and smutty interludes dating back, certainly, to the spectacle of the *pois pilés* and the *badin*, who recited in public a "monologue" or a "joyous sermon," spared neither grimaces nor indecent gestures, in order to win a laugh from the parquet,* which did not know what it was to blush at an obscene word or a bit of licentious pantomime. Thus, in a bygone time, the actors had recited, in open theatre, the *Sermon joyeux d'un despucelleur de nourrices*, the *Sermon des frappe-culs*, and many other monologues in verse and prose, not less joyous and not less filthy. In the time of Henri VI., Bruscambille had become known for the facetious harangues, which he addressed to the spectators before or after the comedy, harangues which had to do with all sorts of bizarre subjects, jolly or ridiculous; sometimes, as in

*The Shakesperian *pit*.

the trial of the louse and the crab-louse, it imitated the formalities of the Palais and the pedantical eloquence of the bar; sometimes, in the form of a panegyric in favor of big noses, it indulged in the following macaronic-Latin equivocal paraphrase: *Ad formam nasi cognoscitur ad te levavi*; sometimes, it took upon itself the task of discovering, under the petticoats of women, mysteries surrounding the leaping of fleas; sometimes it pretended to have made a voyage to Heaven and to Hell to interrogate the manes on this great question: *Uter vir an mulier se magis delectet in copulatione*. There was a sufficient knowledge of Latin in the house to facilitate an understanding of Bruscamville's Latin, and the audience laughed to the point of tears, even when it did not understand, for his mute play said more than words. Sometimes, Deslauriers would treat pleasantly of serious matters, which were less pleasing to the habitudes of the Hôtel de Bourgogne; his frequent theme was an apology for the theater and a justification of the comedian, whom it was his ambition to rescue from the infamy into which his profession had fallen. But he was soon obliged to resume his smutty tone and to keep to his trade, by piling up all the turpitudes and all the most eccentric and filthy jests. The Marquis of Roure has cited, in his *Analecta Biblion* (Volume II., page 152 and following), a few of the obscene proverbs, fantasies and impudent paradoxes which Deslauriers recited and acted on the stage. We shall send the reader, who desires to know more of this, to the *Nouvelles et Plaisantes Imaginations de Bruscamville*, which the author does not hesitate to dedicate to *Monseigneur le Prince*, that is to say, to Henri de Bourbon, Prince of Condé!

And all this was printed and reprinted with the permission of the King! And all this was played and mimed not only in the theater of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, but also in all the theaters of the province (*de campagne*), which borrowed his repertory! It might not have been so bad if the public, which came to hear these villianies, had been composed of drunkards and libertines, of vagabonds and prostitutes; but the bourgeois citizen brought to the comedy his wife and daughter; the young

folk were even more passionately fond than their elders of this divertisement which excited them to debauchery, and everywhere, the theater led to light loves and adulteries, to deceived husbands, to unfaithful wives, to procuresses of Prostitution and the doctrines of immorality. It was in this respect that the people became lost through evil counsels and bad examples. But if they had not gone to see the comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, those of the Hôtel d'Argent, or those of the Theatre du Marais, or those of the fair of Saint-Germain, and those who erected their transient stages in all the tennis courts, they might have had, as a divertisement to degrade their thoughts and instruct them in the school of impudicity, the hideous parades in the Place Dauphine or on the Pont-Neuf;* they might there have listened every day, without unloosening their purse-strings, to the *recontres*, *questions*, *demandes*, *fantaisies*, etc., of the great Tabarin and the Baron of Gratelard, who sold their drugs,† their perfumes, their ointments and their "secrets" by the aid of those "admirable gaieties," those "unheard-of conceptions" and those "jovial farces," farces which were reprinted as many times as was necessary to satisfy the demand of purchasers, who were not frightened away by the impertinence of subject, the boldness of detail or the incongruity of language. Tabarin and his rivals had the right to say everything upon the trestles; their audience had the right to hear everything, and if there happened to be among those present any commissioner of police of grave and austere mien, he was careful not to interrupt the pleasures of the lower classes by imposing silence on the brazen actors of those *farces tabariniques* which were later prohibited by decree of Parliament.

*The famous bridge, erected by Henri IV., over which the life of Paris—and of the world—flowed, morning, afternoon and night, in a constant and ever-varying stream. It was here that Molière made his first acquaintance with the theatre, in the persons of the *Commedia dell' Arte* and French strolling players. A ballet based upon the life of this bridge has been composed by Mme. J. Herscher-Clement and was recently (October, 1926) given its world-première in Chicago by the Adolph Bolm ballet, the set being done by M. Georges Valmier.

†Cf. our patent-medicine man, the snake-oil-vender, etc.

CONCLUSION

We have at last arrived at the end of our labors. We regret the fact that, in view of the small number of volumes which we have at our disposal, we have not been able to make use of any amount of precious material which would considerably have augmented the proportions of this book. Thus, it has been necessary to abbreviate the entire part devoted to ancient times and concerning the history of the manners of Greece and Rome and the lower Empire; we have, for example, omitted the two famous passages which have been suppressed in the ancient editions of Procopius (see the *Menagiana*, edition of 1715, Volume I, pages 347 and following, these two passages being established later by the manuscripts of the Vatican); but on the other hand, we congratulate ourselves on what we have accomplished in the way of researches in the history of manners in France, from barbaric times down to the reign of Henri IV., where our work stops. The fact should not be lost from sight that this is the first work which has been undertaken on a subject which is of no less interest to the moralist and the philosopher than it is to the legislator and the archaeologist. The very leisure with which this important labor has been conducted bears witness to the fact that the author did not desire to owe the success of so serious a work to the impatient curiosity of frivolous readers.

We believe that we have proved, in the course of this vast historic compilation, that the ancient philosophies and religions were the more or less blameworthy auxiliaries of Prostitution; that a true morality for decent folk did not exist before the establishment of Christianity; that the principal rôle of this regenerative religion, in the midst of a pagan and idolatrous world, was, above all, to found a cult of manners, and that manners, upon becoming purified in the bosom of the Christian family, have created modern civilization. We have studied with impartiality the terrible and secret disorders of Prostitution in the bosom of society. We

have shown that at all times this hideous vice has occurred in the face of human and divine laws, which have endeavored to stifle it, and which have been able merely to weaken and enchain it; finally, we have, with care, indicated the diverse and multiple forms which depravity has taken in each epoch, under the influence of the general events and individual influences which have been brought to bear upon public morality.

Our resulting conviction, supported by an extended series of facts, is to the effect that legal Prostitution, that is to say, rather, Prostitution tolerated by law, has never had bonds or relations, even indirect, with the permanent state of manners of the country, and that it has remained always enclosed within a limited circle, which has never been enlarged, save by an increase in population; but that, on the contrary, bad manners, in the most dangerous and the most insistent forms, which have nothing in common with this species of Prostitution, may still be developed in a frightful manner in the elevated classes and grow there, so to speak, like a gangrene in the heart of the nation, if the government and the men who represent it do not labor to combat the emulation of vice among the youth, but close their eyes upon the worst form of Prostitution, namely, upon that ferocious and insatiable love of money which devours the present generation.*

From our hermitage of Saint-Claude, the 1st of January, 1854.

PIERRE DUFOUR.

*La Croix here comes back to what should have been the thesis of his work, a thesis at which he hints in his *Introduction*, but which he proceeds to forget throughout practically the whole of his work, leaping back to it merely at the end as though he had established it. His work, of course, was cut short, and he was unable to carry out the plan outlined in the *Introduction*; but the lack of an animating point of view—particularly of any logical view of prostitution as due to economic causes (such causes, for example, as set forth in Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*)—is too evident a gap to be bridged satisfactorily in any "conclusion." The author's attitude is not *scientific*, certainly not as any sociologist of today understands the word. It is, rather, anecdotal, in the manner of Herodotus. He lacks, for one thing, the calm, dispassionate attitude of the scientific investigator. There is too much of a moralistic, too much of a Christian bias. The "historian" begins by informing us that Prostitution always has an economic cause, then proceeds to include under the head of Prostitution all sexual "disorders," including many which could not possibly have been of direct economic origin. He does not appear to realize the fact that sex is universal—even cosmic—and that man is naturally, a monogamous animal only out of lassitude or inertia. De Gourmont's

Physique de l'Amour would be one antidote; Rabelais would be another. It is, by the way, rather surprising and a bit discouraging to find LaCroix disparaging the fine—especially the Provençal-erotics of his own tongue. He appears to possess a keener taste for the classical sotadics. Does distance here perform its little chore once more, and is a thing less obscene when uttered in Greek and Latin than it is when spoken in the language of the trouvères and troubadours? One more question. Is M. LaCroix a jolly old hypocrite, or is he, as I seem to sense, something of a Huguenot—as careless (with a bibliophile's nonchalance) in his thinking processes as he too often is in his writing? At any rate, he is an invaluable and frequently fascinating source of recondite fact and anecdote.



APPENDIX

Following are free translations, by Mr. Nicolson, of a number of verse fragments in Volume I. Numbers refer to pages of that volume.

Page 295

- (1) Many a man has sold himself and turned to servitude,
As out of her rags full many a maid to that which keeps her nude.
- (2) Great dishonor and great disgrace
If you play the harlot in this place.

Page 296

- (1) To evil whoredoms she must abandon her body.
- (2) And the woman, if she's wed,
Cursed be her bridal bed,
Who by treason in that place
Brings down evil and disgrace
Fit to slay the soul with shame
And destroy all other fame.
- (3) Now you have basely slandered me aloud
And shouted harlot unto all the crowd.

Page 299

- (1) Be neither found in cabin nor in house.
- (2) He has nor house nor cabin nor menage.

Page 304

- (1) You are young giddy varlets and gay lads.
- (2) Rising at dawn, the servant girls and maids.
- (3) For clean bodies in the churches
Not in frocks the wise man searches,
All are joined with maids that shirk
In despite of holy work.

Page 305

'Tis the chamber maids endure in
Where they're wet with noble urine.

Page 321

God, it seems, has many a daughter
But never lacks or bread or water,
So far as I have ever heard!

Page 331

Make-believe, by this propense,
 Thou shalt live at my expense,
 And thy friends shall aid us here
 And not thou nor they need fear;
 Also, they will be exalted
 While the foe is dazed and halted.
 Now thy power and glory see,
 For thou shalt king of the ribalds be.

Page 333

- (1) Clamoring beggers and masterless men
 Who are lost forever from honor's ken.
- (2) Riffraff, who gladly undertake,
 By old custom (more's the pity!)
 To beg beneath the walls of the city.
- (3) Camp-followers who have left the host
 And who, by singing, keep the ghost,
 With some to beg at a city gate,
 While some with bludgeons lie in wait.

Page 361

And where is the Queen who did ordain
 And give command that Buridan
 Be sewed in a sack and flung to Seine?

Page 362

The scholars this to this they pair,
 But Nature soon confounds them there.
 Death only they perpetuate
 Who thus love masculine debate;
 Right womanly they grow in face
 And God's good bounty they disgrace;
 Natural ways are lost, I think,
 While this and that they rub and swink.
 But this to this, being still essayed,
 Nature from them goes out, dismayed.

Page 370

- (1) The dwelling of a lady lover
 Who plaits her chaplets of green leaves.
- (2) Then I descended softly down
 Straight to the street of cordage men;
 But with the women I met then
 I made no discord, be it known.

Page 371

- a house of shame
Wherein they're cheaply hired to push
And beat about the cloven bush
Which decency denies a name.
- (2) One woman like a vixen wild,
Another laughing, "I don't care!"
At the vile words were spewed out there.
- (3) The street of the Chaveterie
I found, but went not to Marie
In the Rue Saint-Syphrien
Where nibbles this Egyptian.

Page 372

- And then the street of the Walnut-tree,
Where divers dames, for ready fee,
Will cheat the card-sharps two in three.
- (2) The house then of a carpenter's wife
Who buried so many men in her life.

Page 373

- (1) In this street now, I know not whither,
Blow men and money and chaff together.
- (2) Where one may often find good wines
And many a man who laughs and dines.
- (3) Where many ladies ignorant
There plucked the strings of their guitars.

Page 374

- (1) I found a man would do for me
What's called fellatio.
- (2) Women who oversee all beds
That are kept in the street of the bedsteads.
- (3) In the end of the street, going down,
From Glatigny, were folks of renown
Live, there are fair dames of the town
Who never were known on men to frown,
And all of your carnal cares will crown.
- (4) Where many ladies of great state
Have many a —— in their —— held,
For in this portion they there dwelled.

Page 374

A man I found in ribaldry
When the street of Betisi
I entered. Manners? What cared he?

Page 376

- (1) A girl I saw upon a step
Who mouthed her business nobly;
And I saluted the demi-rep
And she me, by Saint Looney!
- (2) As I went straitly down Beaubourg street,
I chased no goats I chanced to meet.
- (3) There where gather the plasterers
And the girls call out through grills to see
What passers-by will pay their fee.

Page 378

- (1) In the street
- (2) Where divers dames in these walls spattered
Have had their customers well battered,
Which, as I think, has not much mattered.

Page 379

- (1) The one cries *ho!* the other *hari!*
- (2) Where many a girl, like cloistered nun,
Held many a . . . to feed upon.

Page 380

- (1) There entered I the house of Luce
Who lives in the street they call Tyron
And where they'll sing you hymns, anon.
- (2) A woman there who absently
Combed her long hair the while she poured
Good wine for me . . .
- (3) Where one finds all, for money's face,
That which his heart will soon solace.
- (4) Where many a scold in her good time
Has taken the men like birds in lime.

Page 382

I have sought her till I'm tired!
Now let him seek her who will;
For her my heart e'remore is still.

Page 462

Oh, would that I were in Provence!
To the market-place I'd go
And come to the street where dwells romance . . .

